

Edinburgh & Lothians Area Tourism Partnership (ATP)

10th March 2006

at 9.30 am

Council Chambers, Midlothian House

Present

Cllr Donald Wilson (Chair)	City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr David Costello	East Lothian Council
Nico de Freitas	East Lothian Tourism Forum
Bill McNair	East Lothian Tourism Forum
Provost Sam Campbell	Midlothian Council
Fergus Waters	Midlothian Tourism Forum
Quintin Young	Midlothian Tourism Forum
Pamela McMahon	West Lothian Tourism Forum
Stephen Gallagher	Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian
Kenneth Wardrop	City of Edinburgh Council
Susan Smith	East Lothian Council
John Beveridge	Midlothian Council
Susan Watson	Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian
John Masson	West Lothian Council
Ben Carter	VisitScotland Edinburgh Network Office

In Attendance

Douglas Muir	Midlothian Council
Hugh Aitken	BAA, Edinburgh Airport
Catherine Brodie	VisitScotland Edinburgh Network Office
Tracy Logan	VisitScotland Edinburgh Network Office
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Apologies

Cllr Ricky Henderson	City of Edinburgh Council
Richard Jeffrey	Edinburgh Tourism Action Group
Cllr Hugh Owens	West Lothian Council
Wendy McCann	West Lothian Tourism Forum
Claire Dutton	East Lothian Council
Raoul Barbier	City of Edinburgh Council
Sandy MacMillan	Midlothian Council
Alistair Shaw	West Lothian Council

1 Welcome and introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Area Tourism Partnership (ATP). In particular, the Chairman welcomed Pamela McMahon as the new chair of the West Lothian Tourism Forum and Tracy Logan, External Relations Executive from the VisitScotland Edinburgh and Lothians network office.

The Chairman expressed his thanks for the contribution of Elizabeth Scott as chair of the West Lothian Tourism Forum and a former board member of Edinburgh and Lothians Tourist Board. He also expressed thanks to Alan Young, the outgoing vice chair of West Lothian Tourism Forum.

The Chairman made reference in his opening remarks to positive news in the area:

- Museum of Flight at East Fortune is the only Scottish contender in the list of ten museums and galleries nominated for this year's Gulbenkian Prize. The purpose of the £100,000 prize is to recognise and stimulate originality, imagination and excellence in museums and galleries in the UK, and to increase public appreciation and enjoyment of all they have to offer.
- Research conducted by The Bench (a research marketing information company) and KPMG show that in 2005, Edinburgh achieved the third highest revenue per available room in Europe. The only two European cities with higher revenue per available room were London and Paris.
- The smoking ban takes effect on 26th March 2006. Peter Murphy has announced that all bedrooms at the Sheraton Grand will be non-smoking.

Apologies were noted as shown above.

2 Waverley Line

Douglas Muir (Transportation Policy Manager, Midlothian Council) presented to the group on the planned development of the Waverley Line.

The intention of the planned development is to re-instate a 'fit for purpose' railway link from Edinburgh to the Borders. The former rail link was closed on 6 January 1969. The plan is to re-open the link covering 37 miles of track with stops at Edinburgh Waverley → Shawfair → Eskbank (Hardengreen) → Newtongrange → Gorebridge → Galashiels → Tweedbank.

Current timelines indicate that construction could commence in 2007/08 with a possible opening date of 2011. The group raised potential future issues regarding development of onward bus links and on the opportunity to cater for walking / cycling.

3 Route Development

Hugh Aitken (Head of Strategy and Business Performance, Edinburgh Airport, BAA plc) presented to the group on the work of the route development group.

Edinburgh airport has seen significant expansion in the last ten years and 8.6 million passengers will use the airport this year. Thirteen new routes are to be announced for this summer, which reflects the continued efforts in route development. A key selling point for Edinburgh Airport is that it is 'good for the bottom line' of carriers. The support of local stakeholders in developing and promoting new routes is recognised as another key factor in bringing new routes to the airport.

The group agreed that transport is critical for tourism in the area and requested that at a future meeting there is a focus on public transport within the area and that one of the bus companies is invited to present and discuss how they can ensure tourism is considered as a key factor in development of future services.

4 Minutes of 9 December 2005

The minute was agreed upon.

5 VisitScotland Edinburgh & Lothians Network Office Report

Ben Carter presented the report to the meeting and gave highlights.

The group discussed and unanimously agreed the need to redevelop the Edinburgh and Scotland Information Centre on Princes Street. Ben Carter advised that the VisitScotland Board had agreed to pursue this issue and that a scoping exercise and business case would be conducted during 2006/07.

It was confirmed that all Tourist Information Centres in Edinburgh and the Lothians would operate as 'business as usual' for 2006/07.

Specific highlights from recent marketing activity detailed in the report were expanded upon. The shift to pre-arrival sales of the Edinburgh Pass was emphasised, as was the continued involvement of all attractions participating in year 1.

The Edinburgh and Lothians 'Industry Engagement' team are holding focus groups across the Lothians with the following dates confirmed:

Mid Lothian – Newtongrange TIC – Tuesday 4 April - 12-2pm
West Lothian – Linlithgow TIC – Wednesday 5 April - 11-1pm
Edinburgh – 3 Princes Street – Thursday 6 April – 2-5pm
East Lothian – North Berwick TIC – Tuesday 11 April – 2-5pm

Edinburgh and Lothians continue to show strong occupancy and the area accounts for 24% of all bookings through visitScotland.com. The 2005 value of bookings for Edinburgh and Lothians made through visitScotland.com increased by 23% over prior year.

6 Area Tourism Action Plans and activity – round table update

6.1 East Lothian Tourism Forum

Nico de Freitas and Susan Smith presented an update with the following key points raised:

- The East Lothian Tourism Forum AGM was held on January 26th and was very well attended. The attendees participated in an 'innovation' workshop and generated ideas for the forum to pursue. The industry members were asked to identify what they wanted from the forum to shape future activity.
- Maitlandfield House Hotel has been selected to represent Scotland's prestigious hotels in East Lothian.
- The East Lothian Golf Alliance is working well with a focus on joint marketing initiatives for its members. The group aims to capitalise on the very strong golf product in East Lothian.
- The 2nd World Hickory Open golf championships take place at Craighielaw Golf Club, Aberlady on 5th/6th October 2006.
- East Lothian Golf Guide 2006 to be produced March 2006.
- Watersports continue to develop in East Lothian. A new watersports guide has been produced.
- Visitor numbers have grown significantly at the Museum of Flight with the arrival of Concorde.
- The East Lothian Food Festival is due to take place from 21st to 24th September 2006.
- East Lothian Council will be attending Expo in April 2006.
- East Lothian Council and Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothians are investigating the economic impact of events in East Lothian Council. Events to be considered include the Food Festival, Walking Festivals and the Seniors Open (Golf).

6.2 West Lothian Tourism Forum

Pamela McMahon presented an update and highlighted the following points:

- Pamela took over as chair of the West Lothian Tourism Forum in January 2006. A model to restructure the committee has been accepted. The committee will cover six main areas, with a champion for each. Sub-groups will deliver tasks in these areas.
- The forum has had a successful grant application to West Lothian Council for developing promotional campaigns.
- The forum will issue three seasonal newsletters to its members.
- Two open meetings will be held each for members of the forum (in addition to the AGM). On 20th April, Councillor Willie Dunn will talk to attendees on his vision for tourism in West Lothian.
- Membership of the forum currently stands at 80 members with the committee's ambition to grow membership to 100.
- The forum is looking into Pride and Passion and aiming to identify the important issues for the area.
- A workshop was held in February to revisit the West Lothian Tourism Action plan and draw up actions for 2006-07.

- The VisitScotland chairman attended Hopetoun House and spoke with representatives from West Lothian as part of his 'Chairman's Tour' in February.
- The forum is currently lobbying for improved road access to Hopetoun House and Port Edgar marina.
- The forum is involved in redesigning the 'Discover West Lothian' leaflet for production in 2006.

6.3 Midlothian Tourism Forum

John Beveridge presented an update and highlighted the following points:

- Da Vinci Code film to be released in May 2006.
- A Midlothian Tourism Forum event will be held on 4th April 2006 to review and refresh of Midlothian Tourism Action Plan.
- Midlothian visitor card - leaflet has gone to print.
- The VisitScotland chairman attended Rosslyn Chapel and spoke with representatives from Midlothian as part of his 'Chairman's Tour' in February.
- Accommodation supply and demand study is being progressed. Planning applications have been received by the Council for a new hotel at Leadburn, a guest house at Bilston and a 75 bedroom hotel at Dobbies garden centre.
- Final Challenge Funding claim for the Explore Midlothian marketing leaflet has been submitted. Thanks to Catherine Brodie of VisitScotland for assistance.
- Meet in Midlothian - a project brief has been drawn up and circulated around partners for comment. On hold for the moment until project funding issues are resolved amongst partners.
- Work is progressing with VisitScotland on the reworking of a leaflet to replace the current Discover Midlothian tourism leaflet.
- The Council's Midlothian tourism web pages have been updated with a banner VisitMidlothian on the home page. This is linked in with other tourism sites.
- Potential projects at the development stage include the Midlothian on video project which will use existing footage from the Gems of Midlothian cd-rom to develop a video web site that will serve as a pilot for a new web site to be called Scotland on Video and the development of a language for Tourism training course for service staff.
- The charity Friends of Midlothian Children will be holding a fair at Arniston House on 21 May 2006. The fair has secured Leader + funding and is also supported by Midlothian Council.

6.4 Edinburgh Tourism Action Group

Kenneth Wardrop presented an update and highlighted the following points:

- Councillor Donald Wilson and Richard Jeffrey presented to the VisitScotland Board in January 2006 and stressed the importance of the area to the ambition of growing revenue from tourism in Scotland. Three key areas were identified:
 - Edinburgh requires a medium term strategy for tourism.
 - The Edinburgh and Scotland Information Centre on Princes Street requires development.
 - We need to tackle the quieter months of January and April, which includes the need for marketing Edinburgh at this time of year.

- A transient visitor tax study is currently taking place.
- The accommodation demand and supply study is underway and a report should be available in April.
- The development of a five star hotel on New Street has been announced as part of the Mountgrange development. This is in addition to the development of a five star hotel at Quartermile. Both developments reflect the high yield rate in Edinburgh.
- The Edinburgh International Fashion Festival takes place from 26th to 29th April 2006. The festival is supported through funding received from the Cities Growth Fund.
- As part of Tourism Week, the Tourism Society Scotland is hosting a debate on the Tourism Framework For Change at the Sheraton Hotel on 28th March 2006.

6.5 Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothians

Susan Watson presented an update and highlighted the following points:

- SEEL are involved in two major upcoming events:
 - International Fashion Festival, organised by Edinburgh City Centre Management Company with support from SEEL, City of Edinburgh Council and EventScotland.
 - Cow Parade, Nay-july 2006. 100 cows have been sold so far with some bought by tourism businesses (e.g. Royal Yacht Britannia and Historic Scotland)
- ETAG conference was held on 9th March 2006 and focussed on front line staff. The ETAG skills passport was launched at the event and it is intended to roll the passport out across Edinburgh and the Lothians, followed by the rest of Scotland.
- An Edinburgh / Glasgow tourism collaboration workshop was held on 28th February 2006 in Glasgow. Around thirty possible collaborative initiatives were identified. From this, a shortlist will be drawn up.
- The Edinburgh Convention Bureau Limited strategic and business plans (which SEEL has supported) are nearing completion. The group requested that this be considered as a future agenda item.

7 Dates of future meetings

9th June 2006 – Winton House, Pencaitland

5th September 2006 – Dalry Suite, County Buildings, Linlithgow

15th December 2006 – VisitScotland Offices, Ocean Point, Edinburgh