

**Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Partnership Plan  
Reviewed April 2007**

# AYRSHIRE & ARRAN TOURISM PARTNERSHIP PLAN AND THE TOURISM FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE 2006-2009

## Introduction

In March 2004 the Minister for Culture, Tourism & Sport announced the outcome of the Area Tourist Board Review which included the merger of 14 Area Tourist Boards into one organisation, VisitScotland, and therefore the abolition of membership. The Minister suggested the formation of Area Tourism Partnerships to ensure continued industry participation and representation of local interests. The remit of the Area Tourism Partnership includes:

- Drawing up and overseeing the implementation of Area Tourism Partnership Plans that would/will set agreed priorities for the development and marketing of tourism.
- Input to the national tourism strategy and review of local alignment.
- Securing resources to ensure effective delivery of the Area Tourism Partnership Plan
- Acting, where appropriate, as a lobbying body to further the interests of local tourism, hospitality and leisure industries.
- Acting as a link between public and private sectors
- Acting as a vehicle to engage the industry

The Partnership Plan needs to focus on what is achievable and play to the strengths of Ayrshire and Arran. It should build in an element of pride and assertiveness to be taken by the Partnership in driving the Plan forward. It is also important that the Partnership Plan supports the tourism strategic aims and activities of the various agencies already involved in developing tourism in the area and adds value to what is already being undertaken by the various agencies and industry. The plan should demonstrate additionality to the tourism priorities already in place.

In 2006 the Scottish Executive published the Tourism Framework for Change, a document published as a result of collaboration with the private sector in 2005. It sets out what tourism and hospitality businesses, related sectors like transport and retail, and the public sector agencies which support them, need to do to keep Scottish tourism growing sustainably in that changing market.

This document identifies how Ayrshire and Arran will contribute towards the ambition of growing tourism in Scotland by 50% by 2015. The key objectives and actions are detailed under the four themes of the Tourism Framework for Change: Knowing Your Market, Exceeding Visitors' Expectations, Marketing Your Product and being Sustainable. This is a working plan and will be monitored and reviewed regularly by the Partnership.

### 1. Knowing Your Market

Framework for Change **Target 1** - By 2006, the Scottish Executive will establish a Tourism Research Network, involving the industry, culture and heritage organisations, the Enterprise Agencies, academics, local authorities and VisitScotland to ensure that appropriate research takes place, is disseminated appropriately and meaningfully to all stakeholders and is used to drive innovation and product enhancement.

Framework for Change **Target 2** – Every tourism business, culture and heritage organisation and local authority will collect feedback from their own customers to help them “know their visitor” – who they are, why they have come and what they want out of their trip – and use this to inform their business strategies.

It is important to keep up to date with trends and economic changes. The last Area Tourism Survey was conducted in 2001 and the Area Tourism Partnership is mindful that another survey of this nature is now due. Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire plan to review the research needs in this area and will work with partners to take forward whatever piece of research is necessary to plug any knowledge gaps. Upon completion the results of such research will be reviewed by the Partnership in conjunction with other recent surveys and reports e.g. Ryanair impact analysis, sailing study, accommodation audit, study of golf market. This will enable to Partnership to further identify strategic priorities for the area and reprioritise current activity.

<b>Objective:</b> Use research and economic information to better inform tourism related decisions and encourage the tourism industry to know their markets to identify opportunities to increase visitor numbers and spend.		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Champion(s)</b>
Review current research already undertaken as a baseline to identify any gaps in information. <b>(Complete)</b>	Review to be completed by March 2007. Actions to be identified following review.	SEA
Conduct Area Visitor Survey to ensure knowledge and profile of visitors is up to date. Funding of survey to be confirmed. Sub group formed to take forward actions & methods of communication. Communicate results to wider tourism industry. Encourage businesses to capture data such as visitor information and feedback. <b>(High)</b>	Partners secured to take Visitor Survey forward by December 2006. Implementation plan agreed by March 2007	VS

## 2. Exceeding Visitors' Expectations

Framework for Change **Target 3** – VisitScotland will increase the proportion of businesses in their Accommodation QA schemes to 90% by the end of 2008, develop and extend QA schemes for more sectors, and ensure that the QA scheme criteria are constantly reviewed to reflect changing and rising consumer expectations.

Quality of the visitor experience is paramount. Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Partnership recognises that standards are key to keeping quality consistent and high. The Partnership will support all activity towards raising standards but in particular in the areas of beaches and town centres. It is recognised that the VisitScotland quality and standards scheme is key to moving towards a high quality tourism product and the Partnership will support the principles of the scheme and any relevant activity.

<b>Objective</b> Improve the quality of the visitor experience		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Champion(s)</b>
Encourage businesses to adopt quality assurance standards. <b>(Medium)</b>	Increase participation in QA schemes to 90% by 2008.	VS

Framework for Change **Target 4** – Pride and Passion will double the number of “Friends” each year until 2010, with each friend making a commitment to improving the quality of their product and to passing on the quality message to others.

Framework for Change **Target 5** – To help managers and business owners, People 1<sup>st</sup> will work with government and education to ensure industry has the opportunity to get the skills industry needs. People 1<sup>st</sup> will develop a Training Action Plan (TAP) which will focus on 3 areas identified in the research and at the Skills Summits as crucial to the competitiveness of Scottish tourism. These are:

- Management & Leadership;
- Workforce skills especially customer service and chef skills;
- Retention - of staff within businesses and within the industry as a whole.

Our aspiration is that this will result in year on year improvement in staff satisfaction (working towards 80% by 2015) and customer satisfaction (working towards 90% by 2015), resulting in year on year improvement in productivity

Training and development of the tourism workforce is vital to ensure staff are professional and positive ensuring visitors have an experience they want repeated. Tourism represents one of the few remaining potential growth sectors for Ayrshire and Arran with the opportunity to create employment. However the tourism industry isn’t always seen as a career with good long term prospects. The culture and attitude need to change so that all Ayrshire and Arran residents are proud of what the area offers to tourists and understand that visitors bring valuable money into the local economy. The Partnership also needs to be mindful of the bigger picture of how tourism employment is affected by other issues such as housing and transport.

<b>Objective</b> Improve perception of tourism as a career & provide an environment for growing employment & skills		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Champion(s)</b>
Review career development within tourism industry and complete proposal to implement improvements. <b>(Medium)</b>	Undertake review by June 2007.	SEA/AIE

Framework for Change **Target 6** – The Scottish Executive will help provide affordable homes in places where they are needed most. This will include £1.2billion of direct investment in affordable housing over 3 years, a shared equity home ownership scheme, and a massive investment programme to address infrastructure shortages.

Framework for Change **Target 11** – The Scottish Executive will publish a National Transport Strategy in 2006 which will consider all modes of travel and the needs of everyone using transport, including visitors. Consideration of our future transport infrastructure needs will be addressed by the Strategic Projects Review which will begin by 2006. The Scottish Executive will also undertake specific research into the travel behaviour of visitors to Scotland and will consider any actions arising from this research which will improve the visitor experience.

Ayrshire and Arran is fortunate to have excellent infrastructure already established, however, there is always room for improvement. The islands need to have co-ordinated transport links and good roads for the safety of visitors and locals. Direct transport connections to Glasgow and Edinburgh will improve the accessibility to

Ayrshire and Arran and the perception on distance. Ayrshire is a “gateway” to the rest of Scotland for many visitors though Prestwick Airport and the ferry ports, we must use this to our advantage.

<b>Objective</b> Improve access and transport choices for the visitor and local community		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Champion(s)</b>
Exploit the potential of Prestwick Airport as a major gateway to Ayrshire & Scotland for visitors. Assess the feasibility of opening a TIC at the airport. <b>(High)</b>	Feasibility study complete by October 2006	VisitScotland
Assess signage problem and co-ordinate the development of a signage plan involving relevant agencies (Local Authorities (Cllr Toner & John Spooner) to discuss on a shared agenda basis and clarify how this action can be taken forward) <b>(Low)</b>	tbc	Local Authorities

Framework for Change **Target 7** – The Tourism Innovation Group will foster collaborative working between tourism operators, encouraging them to use innovation tools to come up with creative ideas. TIG, groups of tourism businesses and trade associations such as ASVA will work with local authorities, the Enterprise Agencies and VisitScotland to spot emerging trends of visitor needs and plan the product and sectoral development needed to meet them. Culture and heritage organisations will also develop new activities and experiences in response to emerging markets. The result will be an increased propensity to return and to recommend Scotland as a great destination.

Framework for Change **Target 8** – Tourism businesses will work with, local authorities and culture, heritage and sport organisations to set up local product development networks for the heritage, history and events segment of the market. These networks will develop and market, with VisitScotland support, new products which anticipate and exceed visitor demands, and as a result increase the number of visitors to Scotland. EventScotland will contribute to this target by attracting and marketing major events which meet changing visitor demands.

Framework for Change **Target 9** – By 2010 every tourism business – including those operated by the public and voluntary sectors - will be using e-technology to maximise sales and improve the visitor experience (from internet booking to e-marketing to hand-held e-guides), and will continue beyond 2010 to improve the e-service they provide.

Product development is important to continually improve the tourism offering to the visitor. Consumer tastes and habits have changed so Ayrshire and Arran needs to change to adapt to this. The area has some unique selling points which need to be developed and exploited further and there are excellent opportunities to help create a platform for this e.g. Year of the Homecoming 2009 and Open Championship 2009. Work is already underway by the various agencies on developing the Burns product, golf, sailing, walking and ancestral tourism. The Area Tourism Partnership will support this work where necessary but not duplicate any activity already underway.

<b>Objective</b> Improve the product offering in Ayrshire & Arran		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Champion(s)</b>
Identify product development opportunities from the “Study of potential market for golf aligned to Ryanair”. <b>(High)</b>	tbc	SEA Malcolm Simpson Alastair Dobson
Support product development opportunities from the sailing study and provide input to the sailing action plan where appropriate. Lobby and influence where required. <b>(Low)</b>	Progression of sailing developments.	SEA/AIE
Food & drink sector to work collaboratively and proactively with other tourism sectors to pull together a cohesive product. <b>(High)</b>	Pilot project undertaken by December 2008?	Chamber Tourism Forum Alastair Dobson
Establish Ayrshire & Arran working group of relevant people with the objective of improving path network for visitors. e.g. Paths for walking, cycling, horse riding etc. ATP to write to existing access forums to suggest a joint approach/working group. <b>(Medium)</b>	Proposal identified by March 2007.	ATP

Framework for Change **Target 10** – The Scottish Executive and VisitScotland will study how best to develop a National Box Office which will provide online booking of performances, and prompt parallel online purchase of linked products such as travel tickets. (See also “Marketing your product”.)

<b>Objective</b> Use events to promote tourism in Ayrshire & Arran		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Champion(s)</b>
Identify future strategic events for the area and develop a plan for attracting these events with support from EventScotland. <b>(High)</b>	SEA to host an initial meeting to develop a plan by March 2007	SEA

### Marketing Your Product

Framework for Change **Target 12** – Tourism businesses, culture and heritage organisations, local authorities, VisitScotland and visitScotland.com will use effective marketing techniques to increase the number of visitors who come to Scotland as a direct result of marketing.

Area Tourist Boards are now part of a wider VisitScotland network. Marketing will move towards more product based campaigns and Ayrshire and Arran needs to align itself to the VisitScotland product portfolio but also take advantage of its proximity to Glasgow. Ayrshire and Arran is well placed to offer the visitor something under almost all of the VisitScotland portfolio. The Area Tourism Partnership will help further develop this thinking with the industry and identify ways of supporting the national marketing strategy.

<b>Objective</b> Maximise available funds to market the area		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Champion(s)</b>
Targeted marketing of the golf product identified. <b>(Complete)</b>	Golf marketing plan for 2007/08	VisitScotland

	finalised by February 2007	
Following roll out of the Sailing in Clyde Estuary report, identify where marketing can support growth of the sector. <b>(Medium)</b>	Sailing marketing proposal complete by February 2007.	VisitScotland

### Being Sustainable

Framework for Change **Target 13** – Tourism Businesses and VisitScotland will increase the membership of the Green Tourism Business Scheme each year, so that by 2010 30% of businesses who participate in the VisitScotland QA scheme are also at entry level or above. Our aspiration is to have all QA tourism businesses - including those operated by the public and voluntary sectors - at at least entry level by 2015.

Framework for Change **Target 14** – A Sustainable Tourism Forum will be set up from March 2006, building on the Tourism Environment Forum, to promote sustainable tourism throughout Scotland. This will involve private industry partners, as well as organisations such as VisitScotland, the Enterprise Networks, local authorities, Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland, and the National Parks.

Sustainability is important for the longer term future of tourism. The Area Tourism Partnership will support activities which balance the benefits of increased tourism with the social, economic and environmental impacts.

<b>Objective</b>		
Ensure that all actions taken forward address the issues of sustainability		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Champion(s)</b>
Encourage tourism business to participate in Green Tourism Business Scheme <b>(Low)</b>	Increased number businesses at entry level March 2008	VS/ATP