

**South Ayrshire Council**

**Report by Director - Place  
to Partnerships Panel  
of 6 February 2019**

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**Subject: South Ayrshire Council and Visit Scotland**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Partnerships Panel with an update on the activity undertaken by the Council with Visit Scotland.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Panel scrutinises the activities undertaken and the contribution towards the delivery of the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy 2012-2017.**

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Visit Scotland (VS), as the national tourism agency for Scotland, has as one of its main aims to contribute to the advancement of Scottish tourism by giving it a presence in the global marketplace to the benefit of the whole of Scotland. As is the practice with most local authorities, South Ayrshire Council, along with North and East Ayrshire Councils, has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with VS in order to have Ayrshire and Arran represented via its marketing activity.
- 3.2 For 2018/19 the total value of the SLA is £45,000 and is split equally between the individual Councils, the previous year the combined value between the three Councils was £60,000.
- 3.3 For the Council this £15,000 investment is a reduction of 50% on the previous year as it was felt a good return on investment could be reached by concentrating this spend on social marketing rather than more traditional means. In addition this allows us to place a higher focus and spend on destination marketing through our own channels.
- 3.4 This promotional campaign activity utilises the VS segmentation model to target customers: Mature Devotees, Affluent Active Devotees, Younger Domestic Explorers and Day Trip Market; providing both a UK market and international reach.
- 3.5 The VS promotional activity was initially delivered in Autumn 2018 and is planned again for Spring 2019 specifically encompassing but not limited to the following themes and events – Outdoor Activities, History and Heritage, Food and Drink, Islands and Coasts, Burns, Burns an' a' that! Festival (260<sup>th</sup> Birth Celebrations).

An example of this activity can be viewed [here](#), which includes one of the team in a starring role.

3.6 VS also 'invest' in a number of other activities that, while of no cost to the Council, benefit the area in relation to promoting it to potential visitors and improving the visitor's experience. This includes the following:

3.6.1 National and International campaigns that are important for our product strengths such as golf and sailing;

3.6.2 Support for individual events including Scottish International Air show, Burns Alicht;

3.6.3 Host visits from International Guests; and

3.6.4 For operators in the sector VS also provides 1-2-1 business advice, Quality Assurance, Research and Tourism Intelligence as well as toolkits and advice documents.

3.7 In addition to this VS campaigns and support; the Council supports further regional (pan Ayrshire) and local (South Ayrshire) tourism activity and these are detailed in [Appendix 1](#).

#### **4. Proposals**

4.1 The Panel is asked to note the activities detailed above and the contribution towards the achievement of the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy 2012-2017 as noted below.

4.2 The VS activity, along with local activities undertaken by the industry and the Council, contributes to the achievement of the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy which set the following targets:

4.2.1 Increase the annual number of visitors coming to Ayrshire and Arran by 10% from 3.5 million to 3.85 million;

4.2.2 Increase annual spend by visitors by 20% from £348 million to £418 million; and

4.2.3 Increase the employment supported by the sector by 10% from 8,915 jobs to 9,807 jobs.

4.3 In terms of overall tourism industry performance the latest STEAM (Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) figures available are for Ayrshire and Arran as a region in 2017 and these show that against the overall targets set in the Strategy, Table 1 both targets for visitor numbers and economic impact have been achieved and exceeded. Tourism employment targets have not been achieved but have shown an overall 3.4% increase in tourism employment.

4.4 Tourism employment statistics are based on STEAM model that utilises data from serviced and non-serviced accommodation. Over the last 5 years the number of serviced accommodation has fallen which results in lower employment being calculated. However, other data sets such as the Scottish Business Register and Employment Survey show South Ayrshire as 30% higher than overall Scottish economy for sustainable tourism employment. The Office of National Statistics

and Nomisweb data indicate that around 6000 South Ayrshire jobs are in tourism / hospitality employment.

#### 4.5 STEAM data for 2018 is due out in late Spring 2019:

Indicator – Ayrshire and Arran	Target	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Overall Change
Visitor Numbers (m)	3.85	3.86	3.83	3.89	3.93	3.89	3.94	4.08	5.8%
Economic Impact (m)	£418	£364	£372	£407	£443	£444	£462	£484	14.8%
Economic Impact per Visitor	-	£94	£97	£105	£113	£114	£117	£119	26%
Tourism Employment (FTEs)	9,807	8,852	8,702	8,971	9,138	9,086	9,291	9,153	3.4%

4.6 In addition in terms of overall tourism industry performance the latest STEAM (Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) figures are also available for South Ayrshire on its own. These demonstrate their part within the overall Ayrshire and Arran figures and also show an increase across all indicators since 2011.

Indicator – South Ayrshire	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Overall Change
Visitor Numbers (m)	2.75	2.65	2.71	3.04	3.03	3.09	3.07	8% increase
Economic Impact (m)	£153	£154	£162	£195	£195	£201	£209	18% increase
Economic Impact per Visitor	£56	£58	£60	£64	£64	£65	£68	23% increase
Tourism Employment (FTEs)	3,867	3,797	3,847	4,027	4,006	3,998	3,903	1% increase

## 5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

## 6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

## 7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

## 8. Risk

### 8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

### 8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 There are no risks associated with rejecting the recommendations.

## 9. Equalities

- 9.1 The proposals in this report allow scrutiny of performance. The report does not involve proposals for policies, strategies, procedures, processes, financial decisions and activities (including service delivery), both new and at review, that affect the Council's communities and employees, therefore an equality impact assessment is not required.

## 10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 **Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

## 11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

## 12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to the Council strategic objective to 'Make the most of the local economy' and within that the outcomes: 'Work with partners to improve and promote tourism opportunities and assets, to create a co-ordinated programme of events and activities' as well 'Actively support local businesses in the five towns and rural areas to take advantage of procurement and economic growth opportunities.'

## 13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.
- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Brian McGinley, Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

**Background Papers**    **Report to Partnerships Panel of 7 February 2018 – [South Ayrshire Council and Visit Scotland](#)**

**Report to Service and Performance Panel of 20 November 2018 – [South Ayrshire Tourism Activity](#)**

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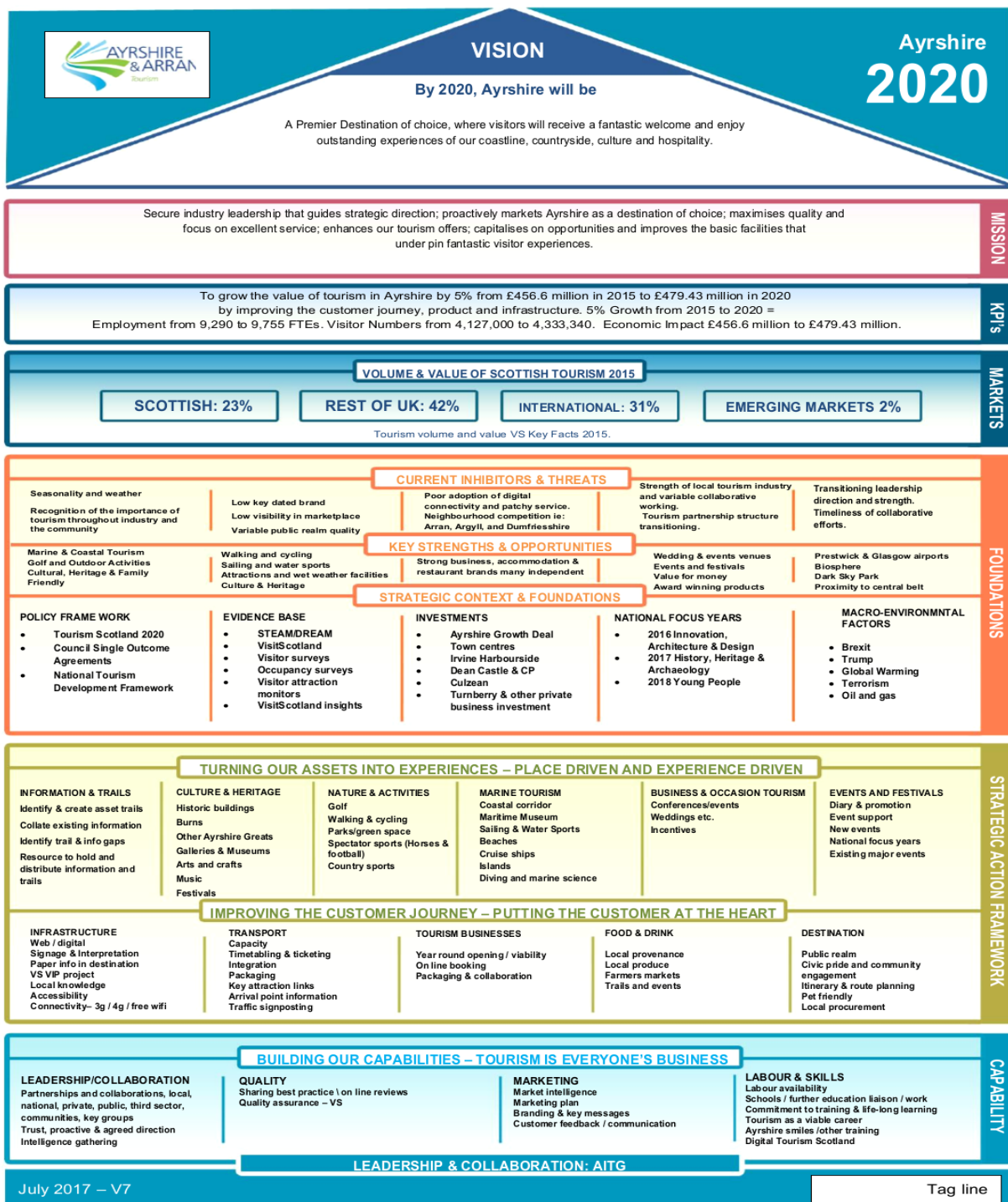
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# Tourism Support Activities

## The Ayrshire Rocket

Since the start of 2018 the three Councils have aligned activity to support the Ayrshire Tourism Action Plan developed by the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Industry Group, known as the Ayrshire Rocket (see overleaf) that runs to 2020, when the new Scottish Tourism Strategy is expected to be published.



## **Tourism Activities**

In addition to the VS activity noted in the panel paper, the Council's wider tourism activities can be split into two levels: Regional (Pan Ayrshire) and Local (South Ayrshire).

### **Regional Activities**

***Ayrshire Golf Scotland (AGS)*** – South and North Ayrshire Council supports AGS to actively promote golf within the region to both domestic and international markets. Its activity has included establishing a database of 15,000+ potential golf visitors as an audience for social media marketing, supporting the development and promotion of local golf packages and hosting tour operator visits from International markets.

***Tourism EXPO 2018*** – this tourism trade exhibition was used to promote Ayrshire and Arran to trade and tour operators; we support local tourism businesses by providing space on the stand and assisting them arrange meetings with tour operators.

***Ayrshire Smiles Training Programme*** - a free online training initiative designed for tourism and hospitality workers. After recent revisions and updates this is now due to be re-launched. Previously there were 1000+ registered users with some 600+ having completed the training. Since the updates were made the Programme has been promoted via the Council's Retailer Support Packs and a VS business event leading to a further 30 registering to date. A wider launch and marketing campaign will follow later this financial year.

***Food and Drink*** - the three Councils have once again joined forces with The List to create Ayrshire Larder – an online and print resource of food and drink providers and trails in the area. These have been distributed to a number of local businesses and accommodation providers and are also issued to guests of International visits and at events.

### **Local Activities**

***Routes and Trails*** - a paid social media campaign is running between October 2018 and March 2019 to promote some of the best walking routes in South Ayrshire. These are themed by month: Oct – Autumn Walks, Nov – Hygge, cosy after walk attractions such hot chocolate venues, Dec – Family Christmas Walks to clear the cobwebs and get off the X Box, Jan – Burns themed walks, Feb – couples romantic walks, Mar – Spring Walks. The Council has been working with the community group South Ayrshire Paths Initiative to develop the promotion of these walks. It is planned to develop a cycle routes campaign during 2019. Further work is being done regarding specific trails such as the Blue Bunnet Tammy Trail and the team is working with colleagues from Cultural Services on a potential Ayr Arts Heritage Trail.

***Dunure*** - with the combination of a picturesque harbour, Outlander filming location, the new Festival of the Sea event and landmarks such as Dunure Castle, harbour and labyrinth Dunure has potential as a tourism destination. The Council along with the Harbour Trust and Community Council are making an application to Visit Scotland's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to create a new storyboard trail that will replace current worn and mismatched signage with a new 'in keeping' set of signs that take visitors around Dunure telling fascinating tales such as the Valkyrien ship rescue and famous people such as Robert Louis Stevenson. This will build on the recent work to provide improved tourism signs highlighting the Castle and Viewpoint with 'An Outlander Film Location' soon to be added to the signs and Outlander images to be placed in situ.

**Dundonald Castle** – the Council continues to support the Dundonald Visitor Centre to the value of c. £7,000.

**Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere** – the Council continues to support the biosphere with a £15,000 contribution and it supported the first annual Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere conference that took place at Culzean Country Park.

**Events and Festivals** - these play a major part in tourism development and generating economic impact for the area. The Council organised the Burns an' a' that! Festival, Holy Fair and Ayr Christmas Switch On. In addition funding is provided to a number of events including through the Events Development Grant or major events funding; this includes the National Bowls Championship. Additionally in kind support is provided to a number of events such as The Scottish International Air show. The Council seeks to assist all South Ayrshire events via marketing channels and our South Ayrshire events and festivals Facebook page now has over 14,500 followers. The team are currently developing a new Events Support Pack for event organisers detailing all the services provided.

**Town Centres** - it is recognised that Town Centres play an important role in relation to Tourism with many visitors spending some time in them. The team is currently working with colleagues in other service areas (for example waste management, Planning and Regeneration) and stakeholders to develop action plans that address issues and seek to build each town's attributes. When these are further developed they will be taken to the Leadership Panel for approval.