

**MINUTES OF THE TFFC MONITORING GROUP MEETING,
VICTORIA QUAY, LEITH
19 NOVEMBER 2007**

Present:

Gavin Ellis (Chair)	
Ian Gardner (IG)	National Trust for Scotland
Robin Worsnop (RW)	Rabbie's Trail Burners
Chris Maguire (CM)	VisitScotland
Fiona Colley (FC)	Glasgow Science Centre
Eddie Brogan (EB)	Scottish Enterprise
David McHattie (DM)	People 1 st
Sue Crossman (SC)	Tourism Innovation Group
Tom Brock (TB)	Scottish Seabird Centre
Alan Rankin (AR)	Aviemore Destination Management Organisation
Katrina Morrison (KM)	Scottish Enterprise
Iain Herbert (IH)	Scottish Tourism Forum
Bob Kass (BK)	HIE
Jane Clark (JC)	SNH
Raoul Barbier (RB)	City of Edinburgh Council
John Brown (JB)	Scottish Government
Richard Arnott (RA)	"
Chris Taylor (CT)	"
Mary Ward	" (minutes)

Apologies

Riddell Graham	VisitScotland
John Ward	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Audrey Maclellan	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Steve Hunt	SNH
Marlyn Howitt	Springboard
Joanne Deponio	SLAED
Marjory Rodger	Chair of Corporate Scotland and Infrastructure Group

WELCOME

1. The **Chair** welcomed the Group and apologies were given.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

2. There were no comments on the minutes from the last meeting. The group confirmed that the minutes were a true reflection of the previous meeting on 12 June 2007.

MATTERS ARISING (ACTION OFFICERS PREPARED TO UPDATE)

3. **RA** commented that most of the actions would come out later on in the meeting during discussion on the Implementation Groups (item 5 on the agenda).

UPDATE FROM THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

4. The main changes affecting tourism that had occurred since June included:

- reforms of the Enterprise agencies/network - with new regional structures;
- VS internal restructuring - work on this is still ongoing.
- Strategic Forum - this will be a route for Ministers to take a more proactive role in making sure that the public sector support for enterprise and tourism are working together.

4.1 The Strategic Forum will be a strategic and economic forum which will meet quarterly. Its members will initially be John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, Jim Mather, Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism and the Chairs and CEs of the enterprise agencies and VisitScotland, with SG officials.

4.2 The remit is to provide a forum to promote more effective collaboration and alignment between the member bodies and to enable Ministers to provide strategic direction to those bodies in line with the Government's Economic Strategy. The TFFC Monitoring Group's best input to the Forum will be via Jim Mather / SG Officials.

4.3 Tourism had featured well in the Government's Spending Review announcement last week. It was significant that the main VS budget line had grown from £43.8M in 2007-08 to £47.8m in 2008-09, with additional funding for Homecoming Scotland, Event Scotland and Ryder Cup 2014. This level of funding commitment is very positive considering the reduction to VisitBritain's budget.

4.4 Ongoing dialogue was taking place between VisitScotland and VisitBritain as the latter faced up to dealing with a reduction in funding, and likelihood of a reduction in operations. DCMS had asked VB to undertake a review of its remit and it was pointed out that Peter Lederer (Chair of VisitScotland) is on the VisitBritain Board so VisitScotland's interests would be well represented in order to maintain joint operations.

UPDATES FROM INDUSTRY CHAMPIONS

5. Market Intelligence and Innovation Implementation Group (Robin Worsnop)

5.1 The last meeting was held at the end of October and **target 1** to establish a Tourism Research Network had been achieved (although renamed Tourism Intelligence Scotland). The business plan had been put together although funding approval had not yet been given. Julie Francetti was asked to report to the Group if this is not resolved.. An industry group will be set up to advise on future priorities and identify areas that require further research and detail around employment.

5.2 Some successful outputs had already been produced 8,000 copies of *The Walking* booklet had published with 2,000 responses from businesses. This had been a major success and showed a real appetite from industry.

5.3 **Target 7** - Foster collaborative working - **SC** tabled a paper summarising various collaborative activities across the industry. See AnnexA. The paper was well received as it shows many positive activities.

5.4 **Target 8** - set up local product - the future role of Area Tourism Partnerships (ATPs) is uncertain at present and VisitScotland plans to review its local partnership arrangements. It was felt that this could be explored in more detail at the next meeting. It was suggested that the guide to *Destination Development* (to be launched as a pilot the following week) could be used as a tool for helping develop more effective partnership working.

6. Marketing Implementation Group (Ian Gardner)

6.1 IG gave a Marketing Group update. The work had been divided into 4 themes with the first 2 having been discussed; overseas and domestic markets. Presentations were given at these meetings and each meeting had devised actions to add onto the Action Plan. Discussions had focussed on communication of the VisitScotland marketing strategy which was seen as being well-regarded but not widely understood (eg the VisitScotland segmentation work) especially around communication and engagement to help industry buy into this. **CM** added that there was a recognition there should be more done to communicate the marketing work at a local level and with face-to face communication. Information was available on the VisitScotland website regarding the segmentation work and marketing strategies. VisitScotland would also be happy to go out to organisations to explain this in depth.

6.2 The importance of VisitScotland and the enterprise agencies working closely together was highlighted. **JB** suggested that e-communication was one way that this could be developed; by avoiding multiple newsletters etc.

6.3 The **Chair** raised the issue of inbound UK tourism figures reducing and what is being done about it. **CM** suggested that the segmentation marketing work currently being undertaken by VS will help by refocusing their marketing activities. There are 10 different segments – each aimed at distinctly different markets. **CM** also gave a brief overview of some of the marketing activity VS is involved in:

- A new cinema advert is to launch early the new year which will showcase the Scottish Isles (filmed in Barra)
- European Touring campaign will soon launch; and
- The Winter White campaign
- A Café Trail (again a rural element)
- There are also various other smaller regular campaigns ongoing.
- See website for further details
http://www.visitscotland.org/marketing_opportunities_main/promote_marketing.htm

7. Customer Experience (Fiona Colley)

7.1 **FC** updated the group and explained that the Customer Experience Group had its last meeting on 31 August 2007 - unfortunately attendance had been low.

7.2 **Target 3** - Quality Assurance (QA) schemes - the VisitScotland Quality and Standards Unit continues to develop new schemes and further promotion of these is planned.

7.3 **Target 4 - Pride and Passion (P&P)** – the group is working with Springboard on the possibility of seconding personnel from the industry to assist their work. It was noted that there are often negative perceptions of the industry which can discourage people, especially youngsters, from working in tourism. The Group was aiming to spread the TFFC messages across the industry and encouraging more friends of P&P. This work is ongoing - there are 9 P&P pilot schemes throughout the country which use positive P.

7.4 **DM said** the sector Skills Agreement (SSA) was awaiting sign-off from the enterprise agencies. The Training Action Plan (TAP) was also not yet agreed. Concerns had been raised about the evidence-base for the SSA and whether sufficient actions are included in the TAP. It was emphasised that there needs to be a clear plan and that agreement on this should be completed within 4 weeks. DM advised that there is a meeting tomorrow to resolve these issues. It was noted that David Allan is the new People 1st representative in Scotland.

7.5 **GE** commented that there was a general frustration that this has not been signed off although **DM** was not aware of any significant barriers to this. **RA** enquired who had agreed the SSA/TAP to date and was advised that Careers Scotland, SQA and 12 other organisations had done so.

7.6 The **Chair** felt **it** important to find solutions and asked to be kept informed of developments over the coming weeks. **DM** added that this was not holding up any work on training. It was suggested that **DM** discuss this with the **Chair** out with the meeting.

7.7 The discussion moved to P&P which has a TFFC target of achieving 3,000 friends by 2012. The Group was informed that the definition of a friend had been revised.

7.8 After the success of the 2 pilot Community Challenge Projects (CCP), 6 more were announced in September bringing the total to 8 across Scotland. RA advised that representatives of the 8 new CCPs were scheduled to meet the Tourism Minister in the Scottish Parliament on 14 December.

7.9 **RA** asked how the Skills Passport was developing. DM explained that this has various components and is now live and will evolve next month after this has been tested with users.

ACTION: GE to speak to JB regarding solutions.

8. Sustainable Tourism Partnership - Tom Brock

8.1 **TB** explained to the group that 2 meetings had taken place and that progress was going well.

8.2 **SC** had asked the Minister (at this morning's tourism seminar) to ensure that the use of GTBS accredited accommodation providers was being utilised across the whole government and public sector when booking business accommodation. The previous Tourism Minister has issued policy / guidance to the official government booking agent requesting businesses with GTBS accreditation should be given priority when official business accommodation is being booked (subject to VFM). The **Chair** suggested that we need to try and find out what is happening across the government on this. It was suggested

that this should bring about business and environmental change and not just procurement. It was questioned whether EU rules of competition allow the Government business to use the GTBS system.

Action: RA to get an update on accommodation booking policy/procedures for government officials.

8.3 **Target 3 – QA Schemes** - the group felt that compliance with GTBS should become an integral element of the QA Schemes and VS should promote this more. It was suggested that we should use examples / case studies to promote GTBS across the industry. It was also felt that in the past we have been too reticent about green issues. It was noted that the new visitscotland.com website will give more prominence to GTBS.

8.4 **Target 14.52 – Support businesses in becoming more sustainable** - this is considered to be a major barrier and it was suggested there should be more resources to engage with industry. It was felt important to include all interested parties such as HIE.

8.5 There were several issues in this area: a delay to the launch of the GTBS entry level scheme “Going Green”. CM advised that VisitScotland hope to finalise arrangements in the New Year. The group felt that the new entry level should equate to the current bronze level and also that the new GTBS gold star standard should be promoted. Concerns were raised about the capacity of the contractor to assess GTBS applications although VS was confident that targets would be met.

8.6 In discussion, concerns were raised regarding views of GTBS within the industry; delays in receiving a visit / being assessed, a lack of marketing presence of GTBS and little consumer awareness of it.

8.7 The Group discussed agreed that GTBS should receive a higher profile. The **Chair** called for an up-to-date report from VisitScotland on this. It was stated that Wales was targeting green issues and that competition was increasing on this issue.

Action: VS to provide update on GTBS issues.

9. Corporate Scotland and Infrastructure - Iain Herbert

9.1 **IH** explained that the Corporate Scotland and Infrastructure group had met recently. Several issues had been discussed inc. fire regulations and how these would impact on tourism businesses. The Scottish Government had given a presentation to the group and organised workshops for tourism businesses. The Group acknowledged that significant work being done to support businesses on this which was very positive.

9.2 **IB** then provided an update on the proposed changes to Licensing Regulations. The group had agreed to hold a separate meeting to discuss case studies on applying these new regulations into businesses. Regional differences should be considered and it was pointed out that as each Licensing Board is responsible for preparing and implementing their own guidance this may cause variances in practice across the country.

9.3 **IH** then provided a brief summary of the group’s Action Plan.

9.4 **RW** asked who the local authority / COSLA representative was on the group. **It was**

thought to be James Fowle and Iain agreed to check this.

ACTION: Iain to confirm the LA/COSLA group representative.

10. ARE WE MAKING PROGRESS?

10.1 The Group looked at IPS statistics for the period Jan-July 2006 which showed an increase of 1.1% in visitor trips. This was an increase of 0.6% (and is 0.5% ahead of the UK as a whole) based on the same period last year. IH confirmed that his contacts generally confirmed that Scottish tourism had had a reasonably good year.

10.2 Edinburgh had enjoyed a very good year and the Festival produced high revenue figures for rooms but The Winter Festivals are not looking so positive - possibly because of the weak dollar. It was unclear how the industry contributes exactly towards providing the IPS stats. It was felt that stats should be discussed at a later meeting.

10.3 It was also felt that the Minister's seminar this morning and this meeting had mostly focused on leisure tourism with no mention of business tourism which is significant as it drives approximately one quarter of tourism revenue.

Action Plans

11. The Action Plans have been discussed previously in the individual reports.

Communications Strategy

12. SG staff had been working on hosting and developing the TFFC website and it is hoped that this will be launched soon. STF offered to answer questions raised via the website - subject to resources.

Future Work Plan / Chair's Reports

13. The Group discussed next steps. The TFFC would soon be 2 years' old and an update report would be required in Spring 2008. Consideration is also being given to some form of an addendum to keep the strategy evolving and in line with the new Government's policies and priorities. The update report should be relatively short and concise - possibly with some case studies. The Group also discussed setting specific challenges to industry as it was crucial to keep it alive and ensure sustainability. A request was made to flag up that things have moved on since 2006.

ACTION: Report and possible Addendum to be discussed further.

Any Other Business

14. SC asked what progress was being made with a national box office. She stated that additional funding was required. One option that could be considered was a private enterprise in Inverness. It was felt that the private industry may be the best approach for funding. Lottery funding may be another possibility. SC confirmed there would be the Booth meeting at the end of November which would look at this further.

ACTION: JB to pursue the National Box office issue with recognition that there was no

funding available from central government.

Date of Next Meeting

15. To be arranged in February/March 2008.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT TOURISM TEAM

TARGET 7 – TIG COLLABORATION PAPER

The Tourism Innovation Group – fostering collaborative working between tourism operators.

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.

Much of TiG's activity is concerned with collaborative working. This includes:

1. Meeting with VisitScotland QA and Green Business UK to discuss how industry can collaborate with those 2 organisations to improve participation in GTBS in order to help reach the relevant TFFC targets.
2. Ongoing dialogue with industry associations such as Eva McDiarmid of ASVA, Gavin Ellis of BHA, Gillian Stirton of P & P and Sharon McCord at STF to identify opportunities to work together. Outcomes include a TiG staff member chairing a session at the ASVA annual conference, TiG speaking at the STF annual conference, TiG input to the selection of P & P Community Challenge locations.
3. The "Tourism Foodkit" is an example of an initiative in which TiG has led collaboration between SE, HIE and industry representatives to develop an electronic tool encouraging food service operators to feature fresh, seasonal, local produce in their food offer.
4. Research indicated that a lack of Russian and Chinese speaking tour guides was having a negative impact on arrivals from those markets. TiG therefore collaborated with VisitScotland, Scottish Development International, Scottish Tour Guides Association and brought in industry representation to plan for and implement a fast-track, but certified "green badge" to train 16 such guides.
5. TiG is working with the Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED) tourism group to plan a blue-print which provides advice on how to optimise the regional economic impact of international events staged in Scotland. An initial working group is planned to develop this idea, including representatives from EventScotland, local authorities, the golf industry, sport governing bodies, FSB, Chambers of Commerce, ATPs etc.
6. TiG is working with Hospitality Industry Trust to encourage their "scholars", (i.e. younger people in the industry who are showing exceptional skills and enthusiasm) to engage in innovation by joining TiG teams, according to their interests. Recent attendance at the global team was extremely fruitful.

7. Regular TiG meetings (3 per year) involve some 40 tourism operators actively collaborating both between their organisations and destinations, and with invited speakers such as Scottish Natural Heritage.
8. TiG team meetings (4 teams, meeting about 5 times per year) bring together a variety of operators and agencies to brainstorm ideas about collaboration and industry growth and subsequently develop them.
9. Facilitated brainstorm sessions have been arranged with industries related to tourism, in order to encourage collaboration and mutual gain. These have included a session with the retail sector, and two with the arts/culture sector.
10. TiG is actively involved in the Tourism Intelligence Leadership Group, encouraging collaboration and innovation through the compilation and dissemination of relevant intelligence.
11. The Project Director of TiG has been an active member of a collaboration of some 7 partners brought together by the Scottish Executive to set the parameters and opportunities for the development of a National Box Office. TiG represented the tourism interest.
12. TiG has existed since 2002, and one of the early successes was the creation (requiring extensive research) of a database of all the collective groups active in Scottish tourism. This focused on destination level action or marketing groups, in which grass roots operators work together to develop tourism. TiG developed an inter-active map to encourage these groups to learn from one another, showcase best practice etc.
13. "Innovation News" is a quarterly Newsletter prepared by TiG and distributed to the in-house database of approaching 2,000 tourism businesses. It highlights successful innovation and collaboration in Scottish tourism, aiming to inspire and inform operators.
14. A high profile event, Tourism Innovation Day is arranged annually by TiG, to stimulate and equip operators to engage with the concepts of collaboration and innovation. The 2007 event was specifically themed "Collaborating for success."

September 2007