

Sustainable Tourism Partnership

Thursday 4th September 2008, Argylls Lodging, Castle Wynd, Stirling

Present

Tom Brock, Scottish Seabird Centre
(Chair)
Dorothy McCallum, Historic Scotland
Sandy Dear, VisitScotland
Lorraine Thompson, Visitscotland
Paul Tetlaw, Transform Scotland
Katrina Morrison, Scottish Enterprise
Maren Ebeling, SNH
Sue Crossman, TIG
Carron Tobin, LLTNP
John Summers, KSB

Bob Aitken, Environment LINK
Laura Stewart, Forestry Commission
Mairi Caldwell, SG

Apologies

Chris Taylor, HIE
Bob Kinnaird, Cairngorm Mountain
Mike Callaghan, COSLA
Terry Levinthal, Scottish Civic Trust
Richard Arnott, Scottish Govt
Jenny Hess, Historic Scotland

<p>1. Welcome, introductions and apologies Tom Brock (TB) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given as above</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</p> <p>Sue Crossman mentioned that Climate Change Scotland is still looking for carbon-offsetting projects to support. Sandy Dear also asked for recent good examples of ‘green’ businesses to put on the green tourism website. Re para 6.3 Sandy has identified a consultant to update the green tourism website, but no start date as yet.</p> <p>3. GTBS and Going Green (GG) update</p> <p>Lorraine Thompson reported that the Going Green self-assessment scheme was launched on 18 August. It was promoted through VisitScotland’s e-bulletin, the Holyrood magazine and to local authorities. The Ambitions magazine will also feature it and it has been promoted on 2 radio slots. More GTBS and GG promotion is planned via VICs (Visitor Information Centres) next year. So far, although there have been 300 hits on its web page only 10 businesses have signed up to Going Green. Lorraine will investigate why the others did not sign up to GG using checklist of items on the website. VisitScotland.com will also create a new website, Visitgreenscotland.com, which will have details of GTBS and GG participants, farmers markets, local food suppliers etc and will be launched in November. Carron Tobin thought this a good idea as it was not straightforward to find GTBS accommodation on the main Visitscotland website. ERDF funding will also provide for a GG co-ordinator to encourage more recruitment amongst the industry, and at a later date, promotion to consumers.</p>	<p>Action: All to advise SC of any suitable projects for funding. Action: All to advise SD of new/good GTBS examples</p>

GTBS numbers remain steady at around 900 as there is a 10% churn annually. This is due to retirements or people leaving a tourism business. Going Green stipulates that a business must go for full GTBS registration within two years perhaps this is a disincentive. Once businesses sign up to GG they will receive regular e-mail update to encourage them to go towards full GTBS registration. John Summers mentioned that this kind of prompting had worked well with the Eco-Schools awards. Paul Tetlaw felt that VisitScotland needed to mainstream 'green' issues especially accessibility by public transport in brochures. He highlighted the Yorkshire Moors brochure as a good example of this. Sandy Dear thought that current VisitScotland brochures did prioritise accessibility by public transport more than car routes. Lorraine also mentioned that there had been some interest from transport operators in participating in GTBS. Sandy had spoken to VisitScotland's UK and international marketing teams about linking up with Transform Scotland. Lorraine Thompson confirmed that they had not yet set targets for GG sign-up although currently they were achieving 30% - check with LT. They are aiming to get 3,000 businesses in GTBS by 2010. According to Lorraine more Glasgow hoteliers are signing up for GTBS. Sue Crossman had spoken to Archie Prentice in HIE who said that the main problem with GTBS was the lack of critical mass in the H & I area. Katrina Morrison agreed that a greater spread of differently-priced GTBS accommodation was needed.

4. Update on Climate Change Scotland (CCS)

CCS is now operational and being managed by Paul Wedgwood. They have developed a website which is set to go fully live in October. Sue mentioned that they were having difficulty in attracting projects, because of the economic climate, but Radisson Hotels and Jacobite cruises were interested in working with CCS. Sue thought perhaps that projects were being too strictly assessed – they were required to show some carbon gain and other benefits. CCS also had some issues with TICOS regarding the carbon calculator. One good example was the Cairngorm National Park who were using renewable energies and connecting vehicles to LPG.

Deborah Murray and John Summers mentioned an initiative called Going Carbon Neutral Stirling, which already had lottery funding and might wish to link in to CCS. He also thought the group could get a good idea of the kind of carbon-offsetting projects from the list of successful Climate Challenge Fund projects. These projects were for communities but unsuccessful projects or ones emanating from businesses could be diverted to CCS.

CCS might have to revise their original targets as they had

**Action: MC
to send out
list of
successful
CCF
projects**

thought they might be turning over £1m by year 3.

5. TIG's sustainable tourism group update

TIG held a meeting in June about sustainable tourism with Mr Mather. Mr Mather wanted to focus on the economics of sustainability - good jobs, community impacts, using local suppliers, - rather than the altruistic elements of being green. At the meeting Edinburgh Convention Bureau had highlighted the importance of GTBS to the 'meetings' market. Sue had discovered that of the 6 priority HIE sectors, tourism and sustainability were very important. SNH and TIG had produced the Responsible Visitor Guide, a copy of which is attached. It is also linked to the ASVA website and other consumer-facing websites. Some of the group asked how this work fitted into developments on the Climate Change Bill.

Action: MC to circulate timescale for Climate Change Bill to STP

6. VisitScotland update

Sandy Dear reported that following the VisitScotland restructuring the Sustainable Tourism Unit in VisitScotland had now moved to be part of the Strategic Partnerships Directorate. He had drafted an internal VisitScotland sustainability strategy which had been adopted by the VS Board and represented a significant change in ways of working. It had been integrated into both the UK and International marketing Departments. VisitScotland had held a successful Green Week for staff in early summer to raise the profile of sustainability. The ERDF funding is to be used for a Sustainable Tourism Projects Officer who will work with STP to take forward the Vision work. This post will be advertised in the next few weeks. SE and SNH have set aside matched funding for this post. The officer would be managed by SE, STP and TIG and would probably be based in Drumsheugh Gardens. Sandy Dear was also producing VisitScotland's Environmental Report for the Greener Scotland Directorate of the Government.

Action:MC to circulate VS's internal sustainability strategy

John Summers asked how the Green Key scheme being used in many countries to recognise sustainability linked in to GTBS and VisitScotland. Sandy would check with Lorraine Thompson what VS knew about this scheme

Action: SD to investigate Green Key links with GTBS

7. Refresh of TFFC Strategy

Mairi Caldwell reported on a statement Iain Herbert had made at the CSI meeting. At the last Monitoring Group meeting, the Chairs of the individual TFFC implementation groups had expressed concern about progress in achieving TFFC strategy targets and the level of industry engagement in the process of implementation. The EET Committee report had also provided

the impetus to look again at the strategy. As a result he had offered to draft a refresh of the tourism strategy taking into account the view of the Chairs and those of his industry members. The revised document which aims to engage the wider tourism industry suggests that there be one strategic group, and four sub groups to take forward work on marketing, investment, skills and infrastructure and transport. These four groups align closely with the 5 levers for tourism growth. Sustainability would become an overarching aim (core to all areas) with an ongoing need for the work of the STP. Analysis of business plans developed by SG, local Government DMOs and ATPs would be necessary to identify a Tourism Business Plan with more measurable targets. Industry would be requested to contribute more to re-energise the strategy.

8. The Vision paper

The group felt that the title of the Vision paper – ‘Scotland – Europe’s most sustainable tourism destination’ was too much of a hostage to fortune. After discussion it was agreed that the document should reflect the long- term aspiration and be retitled ‘ Scotland – Aiming to be Europe’s most sustainable tourism destination’ and this should also be reflected in other parts of the paper. Carron Tobin asked who owned the paper - we would aim to get the Government to commit to the objectives by getting the ST officer to draft an Action Plan for the paper, and put both of these to the Minister for Tourism. Katrina Morrison mentioned that there was no evidence in the paper that it would take into account changing climatic conditions, which would require new products for new markets. Laura Stewart suggested that some of the future scenario work by Ian Yeoman could be incorporated into the paper. Some evidence of adaptability and recognition of the Climate Change Bill needed to be in the paper.

9. Sustainable Tourism Indicators

Tom mentioned that Sue had sent him a list of ST indicators that were currently being used by DCMS and could easily be measured. The group felt that more work needed to be done to identify the most appropriate indicators to fit the Vision. Maren Ebeling offered SNH money and a person to do some work on benchmarking sustainable tourism indicators across Europe. This would hopefully inform the choice of indicators for Scotland’s Vision.

10. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 28 January and the location probably Edinburgh Castle – to be confirmed.

Action: MC to redraft the Vision paper to reflect discussions

Action: ME to take forward

--	--

Mairi Caldwell
EET Tourism Unit
September 2008