

## **Emerging Relationships between Area Tourism Partnerships and the ViSIT Forum**

### **FOR DISCUSSION**

#### ***Background***

1. At the ViSIT Forum meeting on 16 February 2006 it was explained that Area Tourism Partnerships (ATPs) were to be established, covering the same geographical areas as VisitScotland's Network Offices. The intention was that the ATPs would bring together key partners in tourism and would have strong industry representation. Each ATP would co-ordinate tourism development and support activity and oversee the development of an area tourism strategy.
2. The ATPs and area tourism strategies for the Highlands, Aberdeen and Grampian, and Angus and Dundee would all cover the Cairngorms National Park area to a greater or lesser extent.
3. At the February meeting, a variety of views were expressed on the future position of the Park in the context of the ATPs but it was recognised by everybody that the ViSIT Forum and the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan would need to be taken account of in whatever new partnership and strategic planning arrangements were developed.

#### ***Links Between the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the Area Tourism Strategies***

4. Work is now underway in developing the area tourism strategies with the intention being to finalise them by the end of March 2006. The CNPA will be seeking to ensure that there is a strong fit between these and the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. Indeed the area tourism strategies provide an opportunity to strengthen the Sustainable Tourism Strategy as they should enable clear links to be established between the CNP and the surrounding areas. For example, consideration can be given to the role of Aberdeen and Inverness airports as key visitor gateways and the opportunities that exist for promoting combined city/rural holidays.

#### ***Cross-Membership***

5. It was also suggested at the February ViSIT Forum meeting that the linkages between the ViSIT Forum and the ATPs and their respective strategies might best be achieved by having ViSIT Forum representation on the ATPs. While the structures of the ATPs vary, such cross-membership is developing, as follows -

<i>ATP</i>	<i>ViSIT Forum Representation</i>
Highlands	CNPA – Andrew Harper Industry – To be agreed Currently chaired by James Macfarlane (Muckrach Lodge) in his capacity as a previously elected trade representative from HOST’s Board of Directors
Aberdeen & Grampian	CNPA – Bruce Luffman VisitScotland – Ian Dunlop Rita Marks – Moray Tourism Forum Elma McMenemy – Royal Deeside & the Mearns Tourism Forum (Officers Group) Debbie Strang (CNPA), Elaine Booth (SEG), Roger Edwards (HIE Moray)
Angus & Dundee	Currently considering how linkage is best maintained.

6. As can be seen from the above, we have approached VisitScotland to explore how links can best be maintained with the Area Tourism Partnership for Angus and Dundee. In the case of Aberdeen and Grampian there is already strong representation from the ViSIT Forum including industry attendees who attend on behalf of their respective business-led tourism forums. In the Highlands however, while there is representation on the Area Tourism Partnership from the Park Authority, industry representatives have still to be agreed including one for Badenoch and Strathspey.

***Highlands Tourism Partnership – Industry Representation for Badenoch and Strathspey***

7. The former Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board (HOST) had 5 Area Management Committees whose role was to provide local input into HOST activities. This included an Area Management Committee for Aviemore, Badenoch and Strathspey. With the winding up of HOST, the Area Management Committees were also dissolved.
8. To re-establish two way communication links with the local tourism industry, it is planned to set up a number of Local Tourism Forums across the Highland area. The intention is that all groups should involve a cross-section of public and private partners.

9. Each Local Tourism Forum will nominate an industry representative to sit on the Highland Tourism Partnership. Until this has happened the former HOST industry representatives will continue to represent private sector interests.
10. To avoid potential duplication, both the Park Authority and VisitScotland believe that the Cairngorms ViSIT Forum could fulfil the function of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Tourism Forum.

### **Next Steps**

11. The ViSIT Forum are asked to note progress on the establishment of links with the Area Tourism Partnerships and to endorse the principle that it should fulfil the function of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Tourism Forum. The views of those industry representatives who operate in the Badenoch and Strathspey area will be of particular importance.
12. If the view is taken that the ViSIT Forum provides an appropriate mechanism to fulfil the role of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Tourism Forum, its remit and terms of reference would need to be modified and approved by the CNPA Board. There may also be an occasional need for a follow on meeting from the ViSIT Forum, where issues that are of concern to the Badenoch and Strathspey area only need to be discussed.
13. Badenoch and Strathspey industry members on the ViSIT Forum would also need to agree their representative on the Highlands Tourism Partnership.

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