

Visitor Economy Strategy Steering Group

Meeting Minutes (PUBLIC)

16th April 2024

Attendees:

Heath Harvey (HH) (Chair)
Tricia Warwick (TW)
Olivia Chaplin (OC)
Matt Thomas (MT)
Ana Calvani (AC)
Marcus Calvani (MC)
Andrew Shrimpton (AS)

Agenda:

- Post launch reflections
- Delivery phase – action plan creation
- Budget
- Communication and ways of working
- Future meetings

Summary of meeting:

Post launch reflections

The group reviewed launch and shared key findings and learnings.

Overall feedback has been positive, with high levels of engagement with Q&A.

The need for an action plan is clear, and there were mixed views on whether the launch should have happened after the publication of an action plan, or whether it was good to have an opportunity to launch and focus on the long term vision and strategy rather than to jump straight into short term actions.

Delivery phase – action plan creation

The attendees discussed the draft plan, and agreed to provide feedback to OC by email by Friday 18th April. The intention is to focus on what can be delivered within existing budgets and resources rather than speculative projects that do not have funding allocated.

Once this is finalised the plan is to publish it and this will form part of what we report against on a quarterly basis.

Budget

It was noted that a growth bid in 2023 has delivered a small sum of money to be used for delivery of the strategy in 2024-26. Allocation and prioritisation of this limited budget was discussed and it was recognised that there is a need to maximise what we have, and focus on actions that can be delivered within known budgets.

Given the limitations of governments fiscal envelope it is not expected that growth monies will be made available as they have been in previous years, and therefore efficiencies must be found in the use of resources. Greater coordination between areas and organisations that impact the Visitor Economy is needed in order to identify opportunities for join-up and more efficient working.

Communication and ways of working

The group discussed the need for ongoing communications to ensure the key messages of the strategy are penetrating and being heard by industry. It was also noted that resources available for communications in government are being reviewed, and support for communications in our sector is likely to be limited to existing officers and industry partner organisations.

It was noted that there are opportunities to improve communications and coordination marketing campaigns across different stakeholders, including organisations who are not members of the VESG.

It was acknowledged that the message of the value of the industry, its benefits and the risks associated with it is not landing with the Council of Ministers, and more work needs to be done to continue to develop the understanding.

Future meetings

Quarterly meeting are to be scheduled for the remainder of the year.