

Cross-Party Group Tourism

Monday 18 March 2024

Minute

Present

MSPS

- Murdo Fraser
- Ivan McKee
- Jamie Halcro Johnston
- Rachael Hamilton
- Colin Smyth

Invited Guests

- Lucy Casot, Museums Galleries Scotland
- Anna Day, Perth & Kinross Council

Non-MSP group members

- Aileen Crawford
- Andrew McKean
- Anna Leask
- Beth Thoms
- Carolyn Churchill
- Cath
- Chris Foy
- Colin Wilkinson
- David Weston
- Demetriadi CC
- Fiona Campbell
- Fiona Thompson
- Gavin Mowat
- Kathleen Brogan
- Klara Lind
- Jordan Burns
- Lorraine Farquharson
- Margo Paterson
- Scott McMurray
- Michael Golding
- Orchid Liu
- Peter Ovenstone

- Ross Pollock
- Sai Ragunath
- Sarah Allanson
- Simon Ovenden
- Stephen Duncan

Apologies

- Alexander Burnett MSP
- Paul Sweeney MSP
- Evelyn Tweed MSP

Welcome

- Murdo Fraser MSP (MF) welcomed attendees to the meeting and updated he would be chairing the meeting today as deputy co-convenor; instead of Evelyn Tweed.
- MF reminded the group about the upcoming VisitScotland Parliamentary Reception themed around responsible tourism.

Approval of previous CPG minutes

The group approved the previous CPG minutes.

Presentation from Lucy Casot (LC), CEO Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS)

- LC outlined the role of MGS as the national development body supporting 449 museums and galleries across Scotland, leading the delivery of the national strategy for Scotland's museums and galleries
- LC shared the role Museums & Galleries play in Scottish Tourism and their valuable contribution, including telling Scotland's stories and the diverse nature of Scotland's museums and galleries. This makes them highly appealing to visitors who want to understand Scotland.
- Some statistics on museums and galleries as visitor attractions; 6 museums out of 10 most visited free attractions with National Museum of Scotland the top free visitor attraction in the UK outside of London in 2022.
- Value of investments can be seen through key examples of Burrell Collection & Scapa Flow museums.
- 2019-2020 on-site at museums and off-site spending elsewhere in economy amounted to an estimated £900 million of added value.
- Brings a variety of benefits to communities including social impact across the National Performance Framework.

- LC went on to outline the strategy 2023-2030. The vision of the sector's strategy (written collectively) has three main strands: connection, workforce, and resilience. Collections and collaboration are at the heart of the strategy.
- The sectoral strategy recognises the changing social, environmental and social contexts being operated in.
- MGS looked to other sectors to see how to adapt; this included Scotland Outlook 2030.
- Partnerships are key to the new strategy – this includes in tourism e.g. inclusive tourism, marketing campaigns with VisitScotland.
- LC outlined some of the main challenges across the sector:
 - Level or reducing core budgets
 - Major cuts to staff especially civic museums.
 - Exhibition and collection creators, quality and specialists have been the roles at risk which is challenging for the sector.
 - Sector is committed to fair work, but many are struggling to meet criteria, which is challenging in accessing public funding.
- LC outlined some of the main opportunities across the sector:
 - Support sector to adapt and benefit from changes in tourism, and increase partnership working.
 - Want to share learning and potentially and maximise that.
 - Untapped potential cross portfolio policy and in the international space.
 - Keen for visitor levy bill to generate income for reinvestment in the culture sector.

Presentation from Anna Day (AD), Economic Development Manager, Culture, Tourism and Place, P&K Council, Perth Museum:

- AD started with an update on the business case behind the Perth Museum project. This includes an ambition to grow the visitor economy and footfall in the region by supporting the regional tourism strategy to grow overnight visitors.
- There are wider opportunities in relation to boosting the inward investment potential and growth of the social capital of P&K
- AD outlined the key deliverables including: average additional £2.5M GVA annually to P&K and £1M GAV annually - over 10 years
- Some specific elements of the new Perth Museum include:

- Presenting the collection in an exciting way including work with 59 productions on the Stone of Destiny presentation to enhance the visitor experience.
- Previously only 0.5% of collection on show so a great opportunity to showcase more of the collection.
- Showcasing the unicorn, history, significance to Scotland, and its current place.
- New banners and produced with communities, new and emerging artists that tell a story that hasn't been told in a museum setting before.
- Marketing tools including website and centralised box office where visitors can book tickets for museums and other attractions in the city.
- Ambition be a catalyst for wider cultural intervention in the city – including
 - Initiatives such as vennels reimagined by world artists also doubles as safety, lights up dark alleys and using culture to reinvigorate the high street.
 - Jupiter Artland Plus – showcasing world class art on the high street, attracting 8000 visitors and 450 educational visits
 - The Perth highland coo trail: 30 across Perth and Kinross.

Q&A

MF asked about breakdown international / domestic visitors to Scotland's museums
 LC feedback that this varies from city to city e.g.

- Orkney have large international visitors.
- 80% in Edinburgh council museums are international.
- approximately tourism visitor split 1/3 local, 1/3 domestic, 1/3 international

MF asked about Perth Museum breakdown

AC replied with details:

- 60% Perth
- 20% Rest of Scotland
- 5 % Very small percentage international
- Visitor numbers international – not got number of hotel rooms needed to support international
- 3 percent increase on dwell time and overnight stays.

MF asked AD about what's the changing offer for visitors – given reliance on local market

AD said likely people will need more than one visit due to extensive offering, events programme will be important for bringing people back as repeat visitors and school programme

Colin Smyth (CS) said visitor numbers are recovering well, but asked are some areas suffering more than others?

LC replied:

- Patterns hard to spot
- One great success story is Trimontium museum – partnering locally, working at community level, museum shops and cafes
- Kilmartin museum – external factor of landslide
- Some museums being very creative

Simon Ovenden asked about the specialist staff from industry and whether these skills are being lost

LC responded that we are losing people toward end of their career; also losing people altogether from the sector; looking to get an accurate picture of who's leaving

MF asked AD how is the volunteering interest in Perth Museum

AD responded that the volunteer sector was slow to return post-covid however Perth Museum gained more interest given it's a new opening

MF concluded the meeting and thanked the presenters for their contributions.