



**BUSINESS PLAN**  
**2018 - 2021**



## 01

## Strategic Focus

The period from 2018 to 2021 is a significant time for the region as a whole and especially for the tourism sector. The opening of infrastructure projects from TECA and Aberdeen Harbour to the Duke of Rothesay Highland Games Pavilion provide a rare opportunity to seize national attention for the area and help address the relatively low awareness and perceptions of the region. These complement an established, high-quality accommodation stock and rich array of visitor experiences across the region.

A Destination Strategy for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire was published in March 2018. This sets out the ambition to develop the North-east visitor economy to a £1 billion a year sector by 2023, and to provide a sustainable contribution to the prosperity of North-east Scotland. Six themes have been identified as competitive strengths within the strategy:

- **Business Events**
- **Cruise**
- **Culture, Heritage & Events**
- **Food & Drink**
- **Golf**
- **Touring & the Great Outdoors**

This work sits within the context of the Regional Economic Strategy and has a clear line of sight to the national Tourism Scotland 2020 strategy. It also aligns well with a proposed Sector Deal for UK tourism led by VisitBritain.

Successful achievement of targets set out in the strategy will be dependent upon actions taken by a wide range of partners. As the destination marketing and management organisation for the region, Visit**Aberdeenshire** will play a significant part in the leadership and delivery of the strategy.

Visit**Aberdeenshire**'s scope of work must go beyond that of a traditional Destination Marketing Organisation and encompass a destination development role to help ensure that a quality visitor experience meets customer expectation. Visit**Aberdeenshire**'s role is to:

- **Promote high quality visitor experiences in North-east Scotland to targeted audiences in the UK and overseas.**
- **Help to grow the visitor economy through initiatives that help tourism businesses to understand and meet demand from an ever-changing market.**
- **Provide strategic leadership for the tourism sector in the region.**

Visit**Aberdeenshire**'s work plan is based on clear market insight so it can make evidence-based decisions on best use of resources. The organisation is not an island. Its work will achieve greater outcomes in development and marketing work through working with national organisations in Scotland and the UK. It will monitor an identified competitor set.



## 02

## VisitAberdeenshire's Priorities

### 1 PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Campaigns aimed directly at the potential visitor will use social media and online advertising to achieve best use of budget and effectiveness of reach. This work will be amplified through a significant focus on traditional journalists and new media influencers, who will be attracted by the news stories around the region in 2019 and 2020. VisitAberdeenshire's marketing activity will become a more attractive partnership opportunity for commercial organisations. Target markets will be audiences in the UK (70%) and Germany (25%) with minor tactical activity aimed at Norwegians (5%). Campaigns will be themed around the competitive strengths of:

- Culture, Heritage & Events
- Food & Drink
- Golf
- Touring & the Great Outdoors

VisitAberdeenshire will also promote the region through travel distributors (coach operators, online tour operators, cruise companies) to extend the reach of the message about the destination to wider audiences.

The establishment of a new **Aberdeen Convention & Events Bureau** will help to fill TECA and other venues, aiming for a higher win rate of bids for targeted business events. This model will apply the same principles to securing, cultural and sporting events, and bring a new focus to promoting events and festivals to new audiences.

### 2 HELP TO GROW THE VISITOR ECONOMY

This workstream will help businesses to access new and growth markets through a better understanding of, and access to, the distribution chain. This is currently delivered in partnership with Scottish Enterprise. To date, Cruise Market and German Market programmes have been delivered. In 2018/19, VisitAberdeenshire will:

- Evolve the Cruise and German Market programmes and roll out an initiative to help local tourism businesses better understand the role of distributors (the travel trade) to get their product to market. This is an area where the city region could establish a strong competitive advantage.
- The digital opportunity has not been fully seized by sections of local industry to date, and take up of the Digital Tourism Scotland service has been low. VisitAberdeenshire and Scottish Enterprise will deliver initiatives in Q3 and Q4 with a view to accelerating engagement.
- An education programme will also be implemented to help local businesses understand the full market opportunity arising from the opening of TECA.
- VisitAberdeenshire's programme of business engagement activity, from regional meetings to the annual tourism conference, will provide platforms for innovation, discussion and advice.

### 3 SECTOR LEADERSHIP

VisitAberdeenshire will provide strategic leadership for the sector in areas where it is best placed to influence, including but not limited to:

- Destination Strategy. While successful delivery of the Destination Strategy is a joint responsibility across local and national partners, VisitAberdeenshire will provide stewardship for the project including review and monitoring of progress.
- Market Insights. VisitAberdeenshire will curate insights and interpret data that local industry can use to inform their business decisions.
- Tourism Futures Forum. VisitAberdeenshire will initiate a new Industry Forum in 2018 to stimulate transformational thinking on the future of the tourism sector in the North-east.
- A voice for tourism in North-east Scotland. VisitAberdeenshire will represent the region's interests at national and UK forums including the Scottish Tourism Alliance Committee, the Cross Party Tourism Group at Holyrood, VisitScotland, VisitBritain

## 03

## Measurement

Performance measurement is looked at as the destination as a whole and for the outcomes from VisitAberdeenshire's own work.

### KPIs for Tourism In the North-east: From Destination Strategy:

Destination KPI	What this tells us	Baseline	Target 2021 (estimated)
GVA Hospitality Sector	The value of the contribution of the hospitality sector to the regional economy.	£387.4m (2016)	£443.3m (recovery to 2015 level)
Inbound Visitor Spend (Overnight)	The value of spend coming into the region from overseas and the relative value of source markets.	£103m City + TBC Shire (2017)	£154m
Domestic Visitor Spend (Overnight)	The value of domestic spend coming into the region.	£228m (2017)	£278m
Day Visitor Spend	The impact of day visits, including cruise business, into the region as opposed to overnight spend.	£385m (2017)	£432m
Average Weekend Night RevPar	A clearer indicator of overnight leisure revenue as opposed to leisure and corporate combined.	£25.58 (2017)	£TBC
Perceptions Survey	The effectiveness of brand development work undertaken in market.	Baseline in development	
Visitor Survey	The quality of the visitor experience through primary research within the destination.	55% Excellent 45% Good (2018)	70% Excellent 30% Good
Stakeholder Readiness Survey	This will illustrate the competitive strengths and weaknesses in the distribution chain.	62% (2018)	85%

## Measurement (continued)

VisitAberdeenshire Performance (Logic Model). An evaluation framework is currently in development that will provide more accurate forecasting and reporting on VisitAberdeenshire activity. The model includes early estimates of outcomes by 2021 and uses the UK Government Communications Service logic model that has the closest relationship to VisitAberdeenshire's work.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outtakes (what audiences think as a result of our action)	Outcomes (estimated) 2021 unless stated.
Analysis of UK and overseas market data; trends; and outcomes of prior campaigns	Creation of a compelling promotional material (videos, photography etc).  Social media advertising; PR activity; Partnership marketing.	Annual audience reach of 15m pa resulting from direct marketing and PR/ influencer activity	Destination awareness rating among UK audiences moved from 97 to 50 (Aberdeen) and from 160 to 80 (Aberdeenshire).  Increased propensity to visit, reflected in Tourism Sentiment Index score.	Visitor spend attributable directly to VisitAberdeenshire activity.  Increased seasonal spread.
Identify priority targets among cruise operators and travel distributors	Targeted trade fairs and sales activity to reach travel distributors and cruise operators. Host buyer visits. Creation of promotional materials.	Direct engagement with 37 cruise operators pa  Direct engagement with 480 travel distributors pa	Cruise operators see Aberdeen as a 'must stop' port of call.  Distributors understand the growth opportunity from contracting North-east suppliers.	Measurable contribution to the local economy from ports of call.  Facilitation of £750,000 value of tour operator contracts.
Identify priority conference and event targets  Establishment of convention bureau services	Target priority event organisers through sales activity, trade fairs. Ambassador programme with UoA and RGU.	Support TECA and venues with a rolling pipeline of bids with a value of £50m if all secured	Perceived barriers to bringing conference business to Aberdeen are overcome, and benefits are understood.	Confirm £20m in economic benefit to the city region pa from convention bureau activity.
Research priorities for market development among local industry	Deliver Cruise ready programme.	All relevant businesses, and service providers participate	A more informed, competitive and confident sector.	A high quality cruise visitor experience is delivered at all touch points and reflected in repeat business.
	Curate & deliver 2019 German market deep dive programme with SDI.	2019 Programme successfully recruits 12 businesses		Participating businesses fully exploiting German market opportunity.
	Deliver 3 x 'Trade Ready' Workshops.	100 attendees at workshops,		85% of businesses ready to work with distributors.
	Deliver Industry conference, 3 x regional B2B events.	250 attendees at conference, 75 per networking events		Quality target met in annual visitor survey.
Monitor the Destination Strategy	Mid-term review in 2020.		NA	Strategy updated in 2020/21.
Analysis of sector insights	Provision of Insights Dashboard.	66% of local tourism businesses using the data	NA	Better informed decision making by local business.
Assess how to help future proof the sector	Delivery of Tourism Futures Forum.	Stimulate transformational thinking in the sector	NA	Insight for Destination strategy review.