

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Finance Policy & Resources
DATE	1 February 2018
REPORT TITLE	Visit Aberdeenshire – 12 month Progress Report
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/272
DIRECTOR	(Interim) Bernadette Marjoram
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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update Members on the progress of VisitAberdeenshire in the period from 1 April 2017 to present. The period covers Year 2 of the Council's contract for the supply of Tourism Marketing Services and the objectives as set out in the contract schedule.

**2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- (a) Notes the progress report from VisitAberdeenshire appended to this report;
  - (b) Notes that a financial contribution to VisitAberdeenshire in 2018/19 is subject to the Council's 2018/19 budget setting process;
  - (c) Delegates authority to the Head of Economic Development, the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal & Democratic Services to negotiate the 2019-2020 financial contribution to Visit Aberdeenshire, in line with a new contract.

**3. BACKGROUND AND MAIN ISSUES**

- 3.1 The report follows on from the report to the Council's Finance, Policy & Resources Committee on 1 December 2016 on a six-month update of VisitAberdeenshire progress in its first year of operation. The Chief Executive of Visit Aberdeenshire, Chris Foy, will attend the Committee meeting to respond to any questions from Members on the report that is appended to this report.
- 3.2 The new Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire was established on 1 April 2016 (approved by the Council's CH&I Committee in January 2016 [CHI/1515/345]). That Committee also

approved the signing of a Service Level Agreement with the new company for three years from 2016-17 ending on 31 March 2019.

- 3.3 Development of the tourism, events and culture sector is a key priority in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), the Council's policy document *Stronger Together 2017-2022*, the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) and is highlighted in *Culture Aberdeen*, the city's developing cultural strategy (that will be presented to a future Council committee.). The development of the destination of the city and wider region is also a key element in attracting new visitors from new markets through the Council's existing investment in the tourism infrastructure – the new exhibition, conference centre and arena, the Art Gallery and the Music Hall; and the Aberdeen Harbour Board's expansion project that will accommodate additional cruise vessels to the city. The wider marketing of the city and development of the destination is vital to capitalise on the opportunities from these investments.
- 3.4 It is also important that the place has a vibrant and diversified tourism offer so that it can capitalise from exogenous factors that create opportunities in the sector – in the short run, for example, the currency devaluation as a result of the UK's decision to leave the EU has seen a significant increase in Scottish visitor numbers; and the downturn in the oil and gas sector has seen emerging opportunities in non-business markets as Aberdeen becomes a more competitive leisure destination.
- 3.5 The Council's contract with VisitAberdeenshire specifies the services to be provided by the supplier within Aberdeen:
- Strategic leadership and coordination of the sector;
  - Business and partner engagement;
  - Leisure tourism marketing;
  - Business tourism marketing;
  - Events;
  - Business development; and
  - Aberdeen Festivals.
- 3.6 The contract also outlines the agreed performance indicators to be provided to the Council in relation to these services.
- 3.7 Appendix 1 to this report provides the update from VisitAberdeenshire structured under these headings. The first column indicates the detail from the contract under each heading; the second column provides information on current delivery; and the third column provides information on 'next steps' and priorities for 2018/19.

### **Current Delivery**

- 3.8 The report indicates that VisitAberdeenshire is on track in delivering the 2017/18 contract. Performance should also be judged in the context of a change in the leadership where its CEO retired in March 2017, and a new CEO was only in post in August 2018. In this sense the organisation's activity

was restricted until the new leadership was in place. Despite this, progress has been made, summarised in the table below:

**Table 1: VisitAberdeenshire Progress to date**

<b>Delivery Area</b>	<b>Highlights</b>
<i>Strategic Leadership &amp; Coordination</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2013 Tourism Strategy being refreshed and complete March 2018. This will guide VA Business Plan</li> <li>- VA restructure in implementation</li> </ul>
<i>Business &amp; Partner Engagement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 500+ businesses listed</li> <li>- Industry Comms</li> <li>- 3 Industry Forums</li> <li>- Regional Tourism Conference</li> <li>- Tourism Awards</li> </ul>
<i>Business &amp; People Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- German Ready</li> <li>- Cruise Ready &amp; associated workshops</li> </ul>
<i>Leisure Marketing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New website &amp; media toolkit</li> <li>- Campaign Builder toolkit</li> <li>- 1.62m page views</li> <li>- Unique visits: 71% UK market; 5% Norway; 3% Germany; 2% Iceland</li> <li>- Awareness Campaign – targeting Norway, Germany and UK</li> <li>- PR – 806 articles =&gt; 14m people reached</li> <li>- 5 Fam Visits hosted</li> <li>- Travel Trade commitments met</li> </ul>
<i>Business Tourism Marketing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 28 conferences won – 32k delegates and £29m economic impact (2018-2023)</li> <li>- Aberdeen Ambassadors Network</li> <li>- 6 Sales Missions/ Events resulting in 18 positive leads</li> </ul>
<i>Events</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participating in new Aberdeen 365 Events Group</li> <li>- Great Aberdeen Run</li> <li>- New structure to deliver support to Events Sector with a Convention model</li> </ul>
<i>Aberdeen Festivals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aberdeen Festivals are attracting more visitors from outwith the region. Evaluations have shown that particular areas of growth have been from the DD10 and other DD and EH postcodes</li> <li>- All festivals saw growth in attendance in 2017</li> </ul>

## **Future Delivery**

- 3.9 In August 2017 VisitAberdeenshire appointed a new Chief Executive, following the retirement of the previous incumbent in March 2017. An immediate effect of this was that the company operated in a transition period for five months before the new appointment. In the period since, there has been a review of company activity and a proposed restructure of the team in response to the city's tourism priorities, and in particular aligning its marketing and product development to capitalise on the wider infrastructure investment referred to above.
- 3.10 Therefore the report in Appendix 1 also provides a 'forward look' under each of the contract headings. In the next financial year, the company will provide an updated Tourism Strategy/ Destination Plan that will inform its business plan for the 2018/19-2021/22 period.
- 3.11 The new structure will focus on three core areas:
- Leisure Marketing – a new marketing strategy will provide a more focused marketing campaign promoting Aberdeen as a viable alternative to new and emerging markets. For events, the company will seek to expand the portfolio of events supported through the Aberdeen Festivals banner, with a focus on attracting visitors from outside the AB post code area;
  - Tourism Development (product) – there will be a renewed focus on developing appropriate products for industry to draw on. It will include a cruise development post; and
  - Business Events – the re-establishment of an Aberdeen Convention Bureau will deliver a 'one stop shop' for marketing Aberdeen for conferences, co-ordinating aspects of civic delivery including hotel booking services for delegates. This function will extend to sporting and cultural events as appropriate.
- 3.12 The new structure will be underpinned by a focus on research and evaluation (performance metrics) – putting performance management at the heart of the organisation. This will include evaluation of specific marketing campaigns or other initiatives, and will be reported to Council at the 2018/19 progress report in the final year of the contract.
- 3.13 The report from VisitAberdeenshire will be presented to Aberdeenshire Council committee and ONE Board. In developing its plans, it continues to consult with its funders, and wider stakeholders including VisitScotland, Aberdeen 365, SMG Europe and the Aberdeen Hotels Association.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The contract with VisitAberdeenshire states that the maximum amount payable for the 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 will be £520,000. This is funded by the Council's Economic Development service budget. An additional £50,000 payment for services delivered by Aberdeen Festivals is

also included in the contract. This is funded by the Council's Cultural Policy & Partnerships service.

- 4.2 Future payments will be at the discretion of the Council, subject to a review of the services delivered.
- 4.3 The Council's contribution in turn levers £415,000 from Aberdeenshire Council and, based on the contribution of both Councils, £795,000 from Opportunity North East (ONE). In this sense there is a financial risk to the DMO that any change to the contribution from either council will see a commensurate change to the private sector's contribution. Any financial commitment by the Council for 2018/19 (the final year of the contract) will be subject to the Council's budget setting process for 2018/19.
- 4.4 Visit Aberdeenshire is required to engage with officers from the Council's Economic Development Service and other departments, although there are no staffing implications for the Council.
- 4.5 Councillor Jenny Laing was appointed to the Board of Visit Aberdeenshire. The Head of Economic Development attends the board meetings as an observer.
- 4.6 While not directly related to this report, officers in the Council's Economic Development service continue to consult with the industry on development of a tourism levy on consumers that could yield a ring-fenced budget for support to the tourism, events and cultural sector in future years (see the Council's FP&R Committee in March 2017 [CHI/17/018]).

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The terms and conditions of contract between the Council and VisitAberdeenshire were reviewed and signed by the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services on behalf of the Council.

## **6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

### **6.1 Financial**

- 6.1.1 The financial risk to the Council is minimised with agreement in the Terms of Reference of the new company and within the contract for the supply of services. The Council is not bound by decisions made by the DMO where that decision has an impact on the Council or its finances. In this case, decisions would be required to be referred to the appropriate Council Committee. The contract mitigates any risk in relation to any funding contribution by the Council by allowing for annual review.

### **6.2 Employee**

There are no anticipated employee risks.

### 6.3 **Customer / citizen**

- 6.3.1 It is important that Aberdeen City Council retains its strategic role in both the development of VisitAberdeenshire and the key industry sector of tourism. Given the economic benefits of the sector, its success is of direct relevance to the Council's customers and Aberdeen's citizens. Failure to engage could compromise the positive economic outcomes to business and employment.

### 6.4 **Environmental**

There are no anticipated environmental risks.

### 6.5 **Technological**

There are no anticipated technological risks.

### 6.6 **Legal**

There are no anticipated legal risks.

### 6.7 **Reputational**

- 6.7.1 There is a reputational risk to the Council of not supporting delivery of VisitAberdeenshire, around leverage from other funders and not supporting a key sector of the current and future economic development of Aberdeen. This is mitigated by the Council's support to VisitAberdeenshire and during the last year of contract, early consultation on its funding post 31 March 2019.
- 6.8 Risks are also managed through the Council's representation on the board that ensures the Council is able to play a key role in the long term development of tourism to the city and wider North East of Scotland and the VisitAberdeenshire business and operating plans.

## 7. **IMPACT SECTION**

- 7.1 This section demonstrates how the proposals within this report impact on the strategic themes of Aberdeen City Council and Community Planning Aberdeen, as set out in the [Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26](#) and the [Aberdeen City Council Strategic Business Plan](#).

### 7.1.1 **Economy**

- 7.1.2 Participation at board and operational level of Visit Aberdeenshire ensures an operational link between the tourism sector and the wider Economic Strategy priority of growing the city economy. Visit Aberdeenshire has a significant role to play in promoting the city as a viable tourism destination, and in the year prior to the 2019 opening of the new arena and a refurbished Art Gallery, supporting its promotion and attraction of new visitors and conferences. This report and support by the Council will have a positive impact on the city economy and as well as specific marketing services delivered, will also allow the Council to influence future funding models in future. A successful DMO

also has a corresponding benefit in terms of businesses operating in the tourism sector and providing stability and direction for the industry in terms of its plans and talent attraction.

## **7.2 People**

- 7.2.1 Supporting development of the tourism sector will contribute to sustaining and growing job opportunities in the city and improving development of skills in the hospitality sector which supports the Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

## **7.3 Place**

- 7.3.1 Aberdeen and the wider city region's inward investment and internationalisation offer is enhanced by a successful marketing of the destination – to visitors, business, students and employees – from across the world. VisitAberdeenshire will focus on enhancing Aberdeen's competitive position in the industry and supporting diversification objectives in terms of the economy, and within the sector, increasing the city's reliance on leisure markets. In turn this will contribute to supporting connectivity to the place, through Aberdeen International Airport, the East Coast Mainline and/ or Aberdeen Harbour. Attracting additional footfall to the city also supports the overarching aim of the CCMP.

## **7.4 Technology**

No specific impacts.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## **9. APPENDICES (if applicable)**

Appendix 1 – Visit Aberdeenshire Report

## **10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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**APPENDIX 1:**

VisitAberdeenshire Reporting. February 2018

Service Delivery	Reporting	Forward look
<b>SECTION ONE</b>		
<p><b>Strategic Leadership and Coordination</b></p> <p><b>ON TARGET</b></p> <p><i>“The supplier will communicate its business plan and action plan priorities to partners and the tourism industry. It will update the Action Plan as required, monitor progress and report progress to its Board, the industry and funders. It will review and refresh the area tourism strategy in line with the national strategy and local circumstances”</i></p>	<p>2017/18 was a transformative year for VisitAberdeenshire as it enters chapter two of its evolution as a world class Destination Management Organisation.</p> <p>Previous CEO Steve Harris retired in March 2017, replaced by Chris Foy in August 2018.</p> <p>An action plan for 2017/18 was prepared prior to Mr Harris’ departure and agreed by the VA Board</p> <p>Cllr. Jenny Laing replaced Cllr. Yvonne Allen as ACC representative on the VisitAberdeenshire Board in July 2017</p> <p>A refresh of the 2013 Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Strategy was commissioned by Mr Foy in October 2017, and is due for completion and agreement with industry by end of March 2018.</p>	<p>The refreshed Destination Strategy for North East Scotland is due for completion and sign off by April. This will provide a framework for growth for the whole tourism sector in the North East, and a focal point for VisitAberdeenshire’s business plan for the next three years.</p> <p>VA’s business plan is being developed in parallel with this work.</p> <p>In lieu of completion, a provisional budget for 2018 / 19 will be presented to the VA Board on 26 February</p>
<p><b>Business and Partner Engagement</b></p> <p><b>ON TARGET</b></p> <p><i>“The Supplier will compile and maintain a</i></p>	<p>533 local tourism businesses are listed on the visitaberdeenshire website, <a href="http://www.visitabdn.com">www.visitabdn.com</a> GDPR compliance measures for local industry data has been initiated.</p> <p>Regular industry communications are sent out to the</p>	<p>VA’s new corporate structure will rationalise the Business Engagement function with its current ‘Product Development’ and ‘Business Development’ roles into one team. (see attached chart)</p>

Service Delivery	Reporting	Forward look
<p><i>database of tourism businesses drawing on data of previous DMOs and other partners</i></p> <p><i>It will invite free membership registrations using direct email and media channels to implement a members' communications programme</i></p> <p><i>The Supplier will plan and implement an annual conference to raise awareness of its and its partners' programme to tourism businesses and organisations as described in the Supplier's business plan</i></p> <p><i>With ASCHA or its successor it will stage the regional tourism awards aligning with the national Thistle Awards to highlight excellence. It will introduce networking events in localities to develop engagement in its programmes."</i></p>	<p>database by email. The latest in January 2018 had an open rate of 41%</p> <p>The Industry Forum meets 3 times per year with the objective of engaging industry leaders in strategic dialogue. Topics such as rates, transport and latterly the development of the destination plan have been discussed.</p> <p>The 5<sup>th</sup> regional conference takes place on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at the Chester Hotel in Aberdeen. The event is open to all tourism and hospitality businesses in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and will feature main key note speakers on key themes and subjects currently affecting the industry. The 2017 event attracted 180 delegates and was hailed as a great success. The conference now has a good following as a must attend tourism event.</p> <p>Tourism Awards held on 24 November at Ardoe House. Winners of aligned categories will go through to the Scottish Thistle Awards</p>	<p>The unambiguous focus of this function will be to help tourism businesses in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to become more competitive in the market place.</p> <p>This will be achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a continuation of 'readiness' initiatives (Cruise, Travel Trade) including gap analysis to understand what the industry needs vs nice to know.</li> <li>• further roll out of World Host skills programme</li> <li>• opportunities for peer to peer knowledge exchange and business networking at VA networking events</li> </ul> <p>A new position Head of Tourism Development will replace the current Business Development director role.</p>
<p><b>Business and People Development</b> <b>ON TRACK</b></p> <p><i>The supplier will devise a programme of business and leadership development and facilitate its implementation. It will continue the customer service initiative and pursue World Host Destination Status</i></p>	<p>With a total of 120 businesses in the region now accredited with WorldHost business recognition, the region has achieved "Destination Status"</p> <p>Specific business development initiatives this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Being German Ready:</b> Business Opportunities guide was launched on November 22<sup>nd</sup>. The guide was launched at a special workshop</li> </ul>	<p>KPIs will be agreed for this activity within the strategy for Tourism Development</p>

Service Delivery	Reporting	Forward look
<p><i>To maximise the most efficient use of resources and expertise the Supplier will conduct a gap analysis in proposed areas of PR and marketing to ensure that there are appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure coordination where appropriate takes place between and with the various funding partners and bodies. This will include for instance coordinated marketing around city events and development of region wide events calendar</i></p>	<p>attended by 18 businesses. The aim of the workshop was not only to launch the guide but explain to businesses how to be German market ready</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research on the cruise market and how the VisitAberdeenshire and local businesses can fully exploit the opportunities from new Aberdeen South Harbour. Following the research, a <b>Being Cruise Ready Opportunity Guide</b> has been developed. Three Cruise workshops have been held, these helped raised awareness of how the cruise market operates and specifically focussed on what industry needs to do in developing excursions for cruise passengers. Over 50 attended and more are planned for early next year.</li> <li>• A cruise logistics workshop has also been delivered focussing on any potential transport issues. This was attended by representatives from infrastructure and roads from both councils along with coach, taxi and other transport operators</li> </ul> <p>For work on co-ordinated marketing around city centre events, and events calendar, see events section</p>	
<p><b>Leisure Marketing</b></p> <p><b>ON TRACK</b></p>	<p>Narrative and toolkit completed – online at <a href="http://media.visitabdn.com/">http://media.visitabdn.com/</a></p>	<p>A new Marketing strategy will make VA's promotional activity far more robust, effective and deliver better value for money. This work will be complete by April 2018.</p>

Service Delivery	Reporting	Forward look
<p><i>The Supplier will commission the production of a new tourism destination narrative and creative concept to inform marketing communications, launch it to industry and then develop a toolkit of resources for industry and partners to use</i></p> <p><i>It will commission content – images, copy, video and audio as appropriate based on the creative concept and narrative</i></p> <p><i>The supplier will commission a website which presents the area as a destination, leading with the new narrative and propositions. Funding partners will be acknowledged on the website.</i></p> <p><i>The supplier will coordinate and plan a partnership marketing programme with VisitScotland, subject to matched funding being available, and work to identify potential new partners for 2017 onwards.</i></p> <p><i>It will work with Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Business Gateway to create product development initiatives driven by businesses that strengthen the propositions- at least one of which covers the whole area.</i></p> <p><i>It will share with funding partners in order that partners can use and promote the</i></p>	<p><b>The website</b> www.visitabdn.com has been fully redeveloped to be much more visual and inspirational with four targeted sites within the suite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• main Visitor site</li> <li>• Travel Trade (b2b) site</li> <li>• Business Events</li> <li>• Industry and Media.</li> </ul> <p>A campaign builder tool which now allows us to build bespoke landing pages for campaigns with tailored messages, images, videos, translations etc.</p> <p>Aberdeen City Council’s logo is present on the footer of every page on the site</p> <p>Annual figures show 365,883 unique visitors, 492,588 overall sessions and 1,617,962 overall pageviews to the Visitor site, with 73.1% being new visitors.</p> <p>By market, unique visitors come from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK (260,144)</li> <li>• Germany (12,524)</li> <li>• Norway (18,130),</li> <li>• Iceland (8,459).</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 1 of the awareness campaign</b> took place targeting Norway (Bergen, Oslo and Stavanger), Germany (Frankfurt), and UK (North England, London, North and Central Scotland). We have also carried out some work in Iceland (Reykjavik).</p> <p>A mix of airport advertising, bus shelter advertising,</p>	<p>Without pre-empting the outcomes, it is expected that VA campaign activity will feature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A closer adoption of brand Scotland in creatives to support awareness and build demand</li> <li>• More focus on the space / capacity on the supply side to position the destination as a viable alternative to the perceived over crowding in Skye, Edinburgh etc.</li> </ul> <p>It’s also anticipated that work will have a greater focus on Aberdeen city to attract young UK audiences. More work is required to develop the right proposition, including greater integration of events marketing.</p> <p>Greater use of use social media channels, traditional PR, and influencer is anticipated, along with expanded partnership marketing with support from the private sector.</p> <p>Marketing KPIs will be established through the strategy work. A new PR tracking system will provide data on articles attributable to VA’s work, and measure qualitative metrics eg. influence, sentiments</p>

Service Delivery	Reporting	Forward look
<p><i>campaign and PR through their own channels.</i></p> <p><i>The Supplier will support Aberdeen International Airport on route development and maintenance where it fits tourism objectives</i></p> <p><i>It will deliver a marketing programme targeting the best prospect segments/markets with key propositions using PR, digital and trade channels providing opportunities for businesses.</i></p> <p><i>Within the supplier's business plan target markets identified because of their good product fit, good return on investment and good for longer term growth include: UK, Norway, Germany, NL.</i></p> <p><i>Appropriate consideration within communications should also be given to residents as well as visitors to the area to ensure citizens of the region take full advantage of what the area has to offer. Key segments within the target audience have also been identified and include: Natural Advocates; Engaged Sightseers; Curious Travellers; Cultural Explorers; and Business Extenders.</i></p> <p><i>The plan also includes a sales and marketing plan for both leisure and business tourism.</i></p>	<p>Facebook advertising and press activity were used in the January-June.</p> <p>Facebook advertising during the summer period had a total reach of 8,121,735, a total of 178,686 link clicks, and a total of 67,677 Facebook users visiting our website.</p> <p><b>PR highlights</b></p> <p>806 articles published covering Aberdeen City and Shir and VA corporately. A total audience reach of approx.. 14m (Total number of articles is inclusive of all media coverage (including print, television and radio)</p> <p>Five Press trips were hosted by VisitAberdeenshire from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ireland</li> <li>• Iceland</li> <li>• UK</li> <li>• Hong Kong</li> <li>• Nordics ( Norway, Sweden, Netherlands)</li> </ul> <p><b>VisitScotland campaign</b> delivered in Germany during f/y 2016/17</p> <p><b>Potential new commercial partners</b> being scoped – both tourism and non tourism. Includes airlines, rail transport, food &amp; drink suppliers, financial services.</p>	

Service Delivery	Reporting	Forward look
	<p>Product Development initiatives – (see Business &amp; People Development)</p> <p><b>Travel Trade (B2B) Marketing.</b> The key time of year for the travel trade sales events runs February – April so the bulk of activity for this f/y is still to happen. But between the 4 events already taken place this year, VisitAberdeenshire have introduced Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to over 102 travel trade contacts and generated around 13 key leads. Our exhibition stand at VisitScotland expo resulted in a further 300 meetings for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire businesses who attended.</p> <p>4 familiarisation trips for trade buyers from key markets have been delivered, with 1 final one scheduled for February 2018. All have been in conjunction with partners keen to work with us and support us with flights</p>	
<p><b>Business Tourism Marketing</b></p> <p><b>ON TRACK</b></p> <p><i>The Supplier will commission a business tourism section of the consumer website using the same creative approach. It will include reasons to visit, itineraries, the range of facilities, and case studies.</i></p> <p><i>It will purchase customer relationship management software to track and monitor</i></p>	<p>28 conferences have been won for the region, so far, this year, which is expected to bring around 32,000 delegates and a potential economic impact of almost £29million from 2018-2023.</p> <p>The Aberdeen Ambassador Network (AAN) is a partnership between VisitAberdeenshire, Robert Gordon University, University of Aberdeen, James Hutton Institute and the AECC, supporting local Academics to bid for and host business events across the city.</p>	<p>The establishment of an Aberdeen Convention Bureau will be the major development in the year ahead. This will galvanise the existing Business Events function within VA and support the ambition for the new AECC.</p> <p>The primary roles of the new team will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market Aberdeen as a conference and meetings destination to targeted national and international audiences – with a strong focus on association</li> </ul>

Service Delivery	Reporting	Forward look
<p><i>enquiries and to hold enquirer data.</i>  <i>The Supplier will develop tools including a conference brochure, image and stock photography, video footage, a bid document and event giveaways. These tools shall be made freely available to partners so that they can be used extensively at other non-tourism exhibitions and events.</i>  <i>It will attend key exhibitions and, where appropriate, negotiate support from venues.</i>  <i>The Supplier will, in conjunction with Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre (AECC) and other partners, research leads for association, corporate and other conferences to identify targeted prospects.</i>  <i>It will revitalise, manage and develop the academic ambassador programme and support ambassadors to bring conferences to the region.</i>  <i>The Supplier will plan and deliver a marketing communications programme using PR, print &amp; digital advertising.</i></p>	<p>16 Aberdeen Ambassadors collectively brought over 4,000 delegates to Aberdeen in 2016/17 with an estimated economic impact of £4.8million</p> <p>The VisitAberdeenshire Business Events Team have attended 6 sales missions/events – with 1 more set for the end of January – to meet with event organisers – conducting a total of 83 meetings, culminating in 18 leads which has a potential economic impact of around £11.5million.</p> <p>An informal city partnership has been forged with Stavanger, Norway to co-operate on bids, and to share insights – embedded in shared economic challenges</p>	<p>business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support bids for new business, especially through the destination sell (as distinct from the venue sell) and co-ordination of the Aberdeen Ambassador Network</li> <li>• Sourcing and coordination of accommodation and other civic pledges to support bids.</li> <li>• Provision of booking services</li> </ul> <p>A new position Head of Convention Bureau has been recruited for and the post holder is expected to start in April.</p> <p>KPIs for this area of work will be agreed as part of the strategy for Business Events once the new manager is in place.</p>
<p><b>Events</b></p> <p><b>ON TRACK</b></p> <p><i>The Supplier will consult partners on forming an 'Event Aberdeenshire' group and, if there is support, devise a Strategy for major events, and begin its implementation.</i></p>	<p>VisitAberdeenshire is part of the evolving Events 365 Group</p> <p>ACC, AI and AGCC and VA brought the inaugural <b>Great Aberdeen Run</b> to Aberdeen on 27 August</p> <p>In total, 23% of runners came from out with AB postcode with 46% of them staying in paid accommodation. Of the total participants 80% dined</p>	<p>VA's involvement with Events will form part of a refreshed approach that will integrate an expanded portfolio of events promoted under the Aberdeen Festivals umbrella. VA's new marketing strategy will provide an effective framework for promoting relevant events to attract visitors from outside the AB area.</p> <p>VA will play an active role on the Events 365</p>

Service Delivery	Reporting	Forward look
<p><i>The Supplier shall invite the appropriate Provost or Lord Provost of the relevant Council, when appropriate, to participate in events of a civic nature in, or relating to, Aberdeen city or Aberdeenshire.</i></p>	<p>out and 33% attended other events during their stay. 85% agreed that having visited Aberdeen for the run, they would return as a tourist. The average spend per participant was £123.50, and the average party size was 3.1 indicating approximately 23,250 people attended on the event day.</p>	<p>group</p> <p>VA will continue support for Great Aberdeen Run, and the Tour Series. Review options for other major events to support either through sponsorship or in kind methods. This will be integrated into a refreshed.</p>
<p><b>Aberdeen Festivals</b></p> <p><b>ON TRACK</b></p> <p><i>“The Supplier will lead the development and management of 'Aberdeen Festivals', a programme which brings different cultural festivals together to work collaboratively on marketing and programming. This includes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Ensuring that all designated 'Aberdeen Festivals' Charges, as detailed in Part 3 of the Schedule to this Agreement, are allocated exclusively towards the delivery of 'Aberdeen Festivals';</i></li> <li><i>2. Ensuring the employment and effective management of an 'Aberdeen Festivals Manager';</i></li> <li><i>3. Ensuring that 'Aberdeen Festivals' develops and follows a suitable governance structure, including a schedule of structured and consistent meetings;</i></li> <li><i>4. Ensuring that 'Aberdeen Festivals' develops and follows a suitable plan for the</i></li> </ol>	<p>The Aberdeen Festivals consortium has evolved and meets the governance criteria set out in the Service Delivery</p> <p>Aberdeen Festivals are attracting more visitors from outwith the region. Evaluations have shown that particular areas of growth have been from the DD10 and other DD and EH postcodes. Growth indicates that there is room to grow audiences from outwith the AB postcode.</p> <p>All of the Festivals in the consortium saw a growth in audiences in 2017 compared to 2016. SPECTRA (35,000 &gt; 62,700) and Sound Festival (3119 &gt; 7858) experienced the largest percentage growth audiences doubled.</p> <p>Festivals research activity is adopting eventimpacts.com evaluation methodology to determine economic impact.</p>	<p>A new structure or event promotion will incorporate a common evaluation methodology, including use of eventimpacts.com for economic impact.</p> <p>A festivals research project taking in 17 festivals from across the region is being undertaken. The ultimate aim for this project is to find out about economic impact of festivals but also have a clearer picture of who the audiences are, and where our potential audiences may be in the future from across Scotland and the UK.</p>

Service Delivery	Reporting	Forward look
<p><i>programme which includes, as a minimum:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a. An agreed set of aims and objectives of the programme;</i></li> <li><i>b. A distinct identity for 'Aberdeen Festivals', including specific branding and promotional material;</i></li> <li><i>c. A delivery plan, outlining the activity to be delivered and how this will be evaluated; and</i></li> <li><i>d. Taking responsibility for the allocation of associated resources, ensuring they align to the agreed aims and objectives and offer best value in the use of public funds;</i></li> </ul> <p><i>5. Ensuring that the 'Aberdeen Festivals' initiative is fully evaluated, guaranteeing that decisions on the future direction of the programme can be made timeously and based on robust evidence.</i></p>		
<b>SECTION TWO</b>		
<p><i>In 2016-17 the Supplier will work with Scottish Enterprise to provide a new measure of the impact of the Supplier's activities and the value of tourism.</i></p> <p><i>It will work with VisitScotland/ Event Scotland to adopt accepted measures of the economic contribution of conferences and events.</i></p>	<p>AGCC were commissioned to create, and implement a Monitoring and Measurement Framework for tourism in the North East. Two waves of research have been undertaken that will establish a baseline for future years.</p> <p>This will be reviewed in 2018 – see next column</p>	<p>Performance monitoring will be at the heart of VA's activity in the year ahead. The appointment of an Insights and Evaluation manager in February 2018 will provide the focus and capacity for VA to make evidence based decision on it's marketing and development plans; and to evaluate a) the macro performance of the destination, and b)</p>

Service Delivery	Reporting	Forward look
<p><i>Working with public partners, the Supplier will establish baseline data and an evaluation framework in various fields, set targets and report against them. They will include, but not exhaustively: Bed nights, inbound fixed wing passengers at Aberdeen International Airport; inbound ferry passengers; conference and delegate numbers; conference and event economic contributions; festival attendees; digital marketing engagement scores; and, digital audiences.</i></p>	<p>Additionally Perceptions Research was undertaken by AGCC in February 2017 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure awareness of Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire as a tourist destination.</li> <li>• Gather an unprompted assessment of Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire as a region.</li> <li>• Measure the propensity to visit Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire.</li> <li>• Measure the belief in the narrative (i.e. the region's story) for Aberdeenshire</li> </ul> <p>VA team took part in an insights and evaluation workshop in October 2017 to help understand the market intelligence available to the DMO, and how to evaluate the impact of campaigns, events,</p>	<p>the micro performance of individual campaigns.</p> <p>The Monitoring and Measurement Framework developed in 2017 will be refined to focus on the most relevant insights. This will provide a benchmark for measuring subsequent year's performance and greater alignment with national metrics so we can benchmark with other parts of Scotland. Best practice advice is being taken from other DMOs in the UK</p> <p>A second wave of Perceptions Research will be undertaken</p> <p>Greater use of eventimpacts.com to evaluate economic benefits of events held in the city and Shire.</p>
<p><b>Adopt accepted measures of the contribution of conferences and events</b></p>	<p>Eventimpacts.com adopted for pan-festivals research project</p>	<p>Review of economic impact of won events based on new National delegates spend figures.</p> <p>Greater use of EventImpacts.com</p>
<p><b>Section Three</b></p>		
<p><b>Reporting</b></p>	<p>Gaps in reporting frequency have been a consequence of the impasse in leadership at VisitAberdeenshire.</p>	<p>More detailed, outcomes focussed reporting will be delivered from 2018 to reflect VisitAberdeenshire's greater emphasis on</p>

<b>Service Delivery</b>	<b>Reporting</b>	<b>Forward look</b>
		evaluation, both of the destination's performance, and performance directly attributable to VA.