



**Renfrewshire Council  
Scrutiny Board**

**The Role of the Council in Tourism**

**Approved by Renfrewshire Council: 22 April 2004**

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RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL  
SCRUTINY BOARD  
REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ROLE IN TOURISM

**1. BACKGROUND AND CONDUCT OF THE REVIEW**

1.1 The purpose of the review was agreed by the Scrutiny Board on 15 December 2003. The purpose of the review was to:

- (i) Examine the mechanisms for supporting and promoting the development of Tourism in Renfrewshire.
- (ii) Improve the understanding of the issue amongst Board Members.
- (iii) Identify further actions that are necessary to improve the effectiveness of the Council in supporting and promoting tourism in Renfrewshire.
- (iv) To reach as far as possible a consensus view on recommendations for improvement.
- (v) To report the findings to the Council.

1.2 In order to achieve these objectives the Board agreed that the review would:

- Assess the Council's involvement directly and indirectly in tourism including the provision of tourist information and the support provided to local businesses.
- Consider how well Council departments work together to promote tourism.
- Examine the responsibilities of other key partners (taking into account the Government's proposals for change) and assess how effectively partners work together to promote tourism in Renfrewshire.

1.3 The Board's review of the evidence of the witnesses is set out in paragraphs 3.1 to 4.5 and the recommendations are detailed in section 5, page 16 of this report.

1.4 The Board conducted its review over two meetings following the initial meeting on 15 December 2003 when the remit and scope of the review was approved. Oral and written evidence was given by a wide range of witnesses who were selected on the basis of their expertise and ability to contribute their own perspectives to the review. The Board heard evidence from the Council's key strategic partners and from a number of Council services and other organisations directly involved in running local visitor attractions. The witnesses included representatives from:

- Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board
- Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce
- Glasgow International Airport
- Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire
- Braehead Shopping Centre
- The Moffat Institute, Glasgow Caledonian University
- Renfrewshire Leisure Limited
- Renfrewshire Council, Planning and Transport Department
- Renfrewshire Council, Education and Leisure Department
- Renfrewshire Council, Environmental Services Department
- Paisley Abbey

Full details of the witnesses are set out in Appendix 1.

1.5 The Scrutiny Board is grateful to each of the witnesses for the time and effort taken in the preparation and presentation of their evidence and wishes to acknowledge their assistance in enabling the Board to conduct and complete its review.

## 2. CONTEXT

2.1 Tourism is one of Scotland's most important industries generating over £4 billion per annum for the Scottish Economy and supporting 6% of all full time employment. At a recent conference in Glasgow the Chairman of Visit Scotland predicted that tourism has the potential to grow into a £6 billion industry within five years.

2.2 In Renfrewshire tourism is a significant economic driver contributing around £80 million to the local economy and supporting around 2,500 jobs. It is not only an important sector, it is also a growing sector. The most recent figures available from the Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) for January-September 2003 shows that revenue from tourism in Renfrewshire increased by 2% compared to the corresponding period last year.

2.3 Renfrewshire is relatively well served with hotel accommodation having over 1,650 bedrooms predominantly in the large airport focused hotels and an additional 550 bedrooms are either under construction or have planning consent outstanding. With the shopping and leisure facilities at Braehead and Glasgow International Airport, Renfrewshire has two significant generators of tourist traffic. In addition, Renfrewshire also has a range of visitor attractions such as Paisley Abbey and Paisley Museum and Galleries, that will help support tourism. Renfrewshire is therefore well placed to benefit from an increase in tourism demand.

2.4 The Council's role in tourism is led by the Economic Development Division as part of the wider Planning and Transport Department. Promoting economic development, maximising income and creating and sustaining employment opportunities in Renfrewshire are key priorities for the Council and pursuing

these objectives lies at the heart of the Council's economic development strategy. Promoting and supporting tourism is part of this broader strategy. It is important therefore to ensure that any new policies and programmes directed at promoting tourism will be able to achieve tangible results.

- 2.5 A balance will have to be struck between spending resources on tourism and on the other economic development initiatives. The Scrutiny Board needs to identify the key areas in tourism where the Council can add value and be clear about the economic benefits that will flow from investing and intervening in these areas. For example, for every additional pound spent by the Council in promoting tourism how much added investment will be levered into Renfrewshire? What is the cost of each new job created by this investment and how does this compare to the level that agencies such as Scottish Enterprise would expect when assessing whether or not to support a new project? The Board needs to be clear about the economic benefits that will be generated from Council intervention.
- 2.6 Although tourism is not a statutory function the Council has recognised the value that tourism can bring to the area and has allocated resources to support it. Specifically within the Economic Development team the Tourism Development Officer has responsibility for co-ordinating and implementing the Council's tourism strategy. In addition to this staffing resource, the Council also contributes to the funding of the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Area Tourist Board (£57,000), it funds the Paisley Tourist Information Centre (£47,000) and manages a promotion and development fund (£40,000) to promote tourist related activities across Renfrewshire.
- 2.7 As well as being a core funder of the Area Tourist Board, other Council departments also provide a range of services and manage facilities which have a direct impact on the tourism sector. These include:

- Services**
- Planning - Development Control and Building Control
  - Environmental Services - parks and the environment
  - Trading Standards
  - Licensing
  - Roads - tourist signage
  - Leisure
  - Arts and culture

- Facilities**
- Paisley Museum and Art Galleries
  - Paisley Arts Centre
  - Gleniffer Braes Country Park
  - Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park
  - Coats Observatory
  - Lagoon Leisure Centre

### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

#### 3.1 **Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board**

3.1.1 The Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board is the organisation with statutory responsibility for marketing tourism within the Renfrewshire Council area. The Area Tourist Board structure is currently being reviewed by the Scottish Executive. The review should have been completed some time ago but has been delayed and it is now anticipated that it will be published early this year. In the response to the Scottish Executive consultation paper on the Area Tourist Board review the Council has indicated that because of the economic linkages that exist between Renfrewshire and Glasgow, the Council wishes to remain part of the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board. When the Scottish Executive publishes its review of the Area Tourist Board structure later this year the Council should take this opportunity to reappraise its relationship with the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board to ensure that the Council achieves maximum benefits from membership.

3.1.2 Although the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board is a statutory body it does not have statutory funding. Instead the Board receives funding from its constituent members with Renfrewshire Council contributing £57,000 to core funding with a further £47,000 to support the Tourist Information Centre in Paisley. This compares to £2 million core funding that Glasgow City Council contributes. In their evidence to the Board, the witnesses from the Moffat Institute, Braehead Centre and the Chamber of Commerce noted that with this funding imbalance, the focus of the Area Tourist Board is inevitably centred on Glasgow with Renfrewshire being promoted as part of the general marketing for the whole Tourist Board Area.

3.1.3 Renfrewshire is included in Tourist Board promotional publications, in the general strategic marketing activities and in route development with Glasgow International Airport but it is difficult to identify how many of the tourists and day visitors who come to Renfrewshire can be attributed to these promotional activities and how many of them would have visited Renfrewshire in any event. There is little hard statistical information on tourism in Renfrewshire. There is no mechanism in place to track the source of Renfrewshire tourists or to determine where they accessed information about the area so it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the Board's marketing approach and what impact it is having on Renfrewshire. However, the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board are currently conducting a large scale visitor survey which will provide valuable market research information for Renfrewshire and this can be used to prioritise and target actions.

#### 3.2 **Renfrewshire Tourism Strategy**

3.2.1 The Council approved its Tourism Strategy in 1996 but since then events have moved on and in their evidence to the Scrutiny Board the Area Tourist Board,

and all the other partner agencies, agreed that the tourism strategy now needs to be reviewed. Given the commitment from partners to work together on tourism this provides an opportunity to involve them in developing this strategy.

3.2.2 New opportunities for tourism have opened up since the current strategy was approved. These include the developing possibilities for tourism at Braehead Shopping Centre, the future opportunities that the proposed leisure complex and hotel will bring together with the new routes being developed at Glasgow International Airport. In addition, since publication of the strategy, many of the partner agencies have restructured and revised their priorities. There have also been organisational changes within the Council. The creation of Renfrewshire Leisure Limited will offer increased scope for this service to make a more significant contribution to the revised tourism strategy.

3.2.3. The Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire witness submitted evidence to the Board on independent research that his organisation had commissioned to find out how other successful agencies have made the most of their tourism assets. The research findings indicate that the key success factors included:

- focusing on what is unique or distinctive.
- integrating traditional products with new ones.
- strong leadership.
- a clear understanding of what the customer wants.
- businesses collaborating to offer an all year round visitor experience.
- targeting the visits which bring most value to the local economy.

3.2.4 These key factors should form the basis of the revised tourism strategy. The new strategy should be developed with the Council's partners at the earliest opportunity and be set within the framework provided by the Scottish Executive's review of the Area Tourist Board structure.

3.2.5 It is important that the revised strategy when developed, has measurable objectives and targets and the specific role of each stakeholder in implementing the strategy is clearly defined and agreed by all parties. The Council should be able to measure the impact that both its programmes and the actions of its partners, are having on the local economy.

### **3.3 Renfrewshire Tourism Forum**

3.3.1 In her evidence to the Board the Chief Executive of the Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce raised a number of concerns about tourism in Renfrewshire. In particular the Chamber of Commerce considered that there was a need for:

- a stronger tourism strategy for Renfrewshire
- a marketing strategy that focuses on the tourist opportunities
- a targeted promotional campaign that focused on Renfrewshire.
- a collective co-ordinated approach to tourism.

- market research to identify a baseline position which could be used to measure progress against objectives/targets.
- more realistic funding

3.3.2 In their evidence to the Board, the Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce recommended that consideration should be given to creating a single local organisation to develop and implement the Renfrewshire Tourist Strategy and Action Plan. The Chamber has focused on tourism as one of its key policy issues to be taken forward in 2004 and has formed a Tourist Strategy Group working with their members who are involved in tourism and with the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board. With this fragmented approach there is a danger that there could be overlap and duplication of effort unless all the partners involved in tourism work closely together.

3.3.3 The Chamber of Commerce proposed that a Renfrewshire Tourist Board be established. However this would not be a feasible proposition as it would cut across the operation of the Area Tourist Board, it would be a high cost option and would be difficult for partners to support or sustain. It was agreed that it would be helpful if there was some mechanism in place where all the organisations and agencies involved with tourism in Renfrewshire could meet to discuss issues of common concern.

3.3.4 An alternative approach to a Renfrewshire Tourist Board would be for the partners to set up a formal tourism group (Renfrewshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire and the Chamber of Commerce) that would work with the Area Tourist Board to develop a joint approach to tourism in Renfrewshire. This group/forum would provide joint planning and potentially some limited budget pooling for promotional activities. Careful consideration would have to be given to the level of representation from member organisations - it would have to be at a senior level to ensure buy in and commitment from partners - and the level of support needed to sustain the group. The main advantage of the forum is that it would have a clear focus on Renfrewshire. Its functions would be to:

- develop the strategy
- agree priorities
- access funding
- monitor progress and report successes
- integrate tourism with other service areas
- highlight opportunities
- provide market intelligence
- review and revise strategy as necessary

3.3.5 West Lothian which has very similar characteristics to Renfrewshire in regard to tourism (in the shadow of a major tourist city, international airport and a weakly defined tourist product) has set up the West Lothian Tourism Forum. This is a fully constituted local group with members voting rights, executive committee, annual subscriptions etc. This model should be evaluated to see whether it would help co-ordinate and promote tourism in Renfrewshire.

### **3.4 Glasgow Airport - Gateway Status**

- 3.4.1 Renfrewshire holds “Gateway” status for visitors with major air, road, rail and ferry links within, or in close proximity to the area. Gateway status offers the significant potential to increase the number of visitors to Renfrewshire and change the profile of visitors as new markets are opened up. The Scottish Executive’s Route Development Fund is directed at opening up new routes and this has resulted in the first scheduled direct air service from Glasgow to Dubai. As the Emirates market is opened up it will offer the potential for increased tourist flows to the West of Scotland and beyond.
- 3.4.2 The Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire witness provided evidence to the Board on the experience of Ryanair at Prestwick which illustrated the economic impact that low cost flights can have within the local area. In 2002/03 Ryanair inbound passengers stayed for 2.4 million nights in Scotland with 25% of these being in Ayrshire. The revised tourism strategy should identify actions needed to be put in place to ensure that Renfrewshire is able to capture a larger proportion of the passenger nights generated by flights coming into Glasgow Airport.

### **3.5 Marketing and Promotion**

- 3.5.1 The Area Tourist Board witness emphasised the need for the Council to focus its tourism strategy on the unique strengths of the area. The strategy needs to identify a product or brand and then actively promote it. However, part of the problem is that Renfrewshire does not have an immediately recognisable product or well developed image that can be sold to tourists. Paisley on the other hand does have a stronger brand - it has the internationally recognised Paisley Pattern, Paisley Abbey and the strong architectural and historical heritage associated with weaving and the mills. In marketing the attraction of the area to visitors the Council and its partners will have decide whether to focus on Paisley as the brand or as we currently do, on Renfrewshire.
- 3.5.2 The Chamber of Commerce and the Council witnesses from the Museum, Arts and Leisure also took the view that there should be a specific website to cover events in Renfrewshire to promote the attractions of the area and this should be linked to other web sites such as those run by Renfrewshire Council and the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board. It was suggested to the Board that the web site could possibly be financed from partners with potentially European match funding. The feasibility of submitting a bid for European funding should be examined as part of the tourism strategy.
- 3.5.3 Currently the Council provides £47,000 for the Paisley Tourist Information Centre. In his evidence to the Board Professor Lennon from the Moffat Institute noted that Tourist Information Centres represent a communication and sales medium that have failed to keep pace with how communication and marketing of hospitality has changed. Today potential visitors to an area are increasingly

using the Internet to access information about tourist attractions and accommodation before making decisions about whether to come or not to come to an area. The Tourist Information Service and its ability to generate revenues and book accommodation in Renfrewshire must be judged against its development and operating costs. The operation of the Tourist Information Centre in Paisley should be reviewed to assess its effectiveness, including the possibility of providing information through other channels.

- 3.5.4 There are insufficient resources to support both types of information provision. The effectiveness of the Tourist Information Centre therefore needs to be measured against the benefits that would flow from a dedicated tourist information and “What’s On” web site. North and South Lanarkshire Councils plan to set up a web site on the lines suggested by the Chamber of Commerce and are currently inviting tenders for the site. Their experience should be evaluated before taking this forward.
- 3.5.5 In his evidence to the Board the Managing Director of the Braehead Centre suggested that partners should consider pooling resources to create a single fund that could be used to promote Renfrewshire. One possibility would be to “top slice” current marketing budgets and use this as match funding for a ERDF submission. The practicalities of achieving this should be investigated further as part of the review of the tourism strategy.

### **3.6 The Renfrewshire Product**

- 3.6.1 The Area Tourist Board witness emphasised the need for the Council to focus its tourism strategy on the unique strengths of the area. The strategy should identify a strong product or brand and then promote it. The Chamber of Commerce believes that Renfrewshire should be exploiting its tourist potential more fully but this will require much more focused promotion than takes place at the present time. As well as increased marketing and promotion the Renfrewshire product will have to be more attractive to potential tourists.
- 3.6.2 All the witnesses presenting evidence to the Board agreed that the Braehead Centre offered the greatest potential to attract visitors into Renfrewshire. In Braehead, Renfrewshire has a major retail facility attracting over 20 million visitors annually. The proposed Xscape Centre will be the largest leisure centre in Scotland offering real indoor snow with skiing and snow boarding and is destined to become one of the main visitor attractions drawing in day visitors and tourists into Renfrewshire. Braehead should be a key component in the revised tourism strategy.
- 3.6.3 The other key strands that witnesses identified as forming the core of the revised tourism strategy include: the short break market, business tourism, conferences and staging of events. In their evidence to the Board the witnesses from Council services most directly involved in tourism provided practical examples of how they could contribute to these four strands. Their proposals are covered in paragraphs 4.1 - 4.5

### **3.7. Short Break Market**

- 3.7.1 The Tourist Board witness identified the short break market as one of the key growth areas in tourism but it was noted that short breaks are very destination specific with short lead in times (around 4 weeks). Currently, 57% of the short break market is concentrated in Glasgow and Edinburgh. With its current marketing strategy, the Area Tourist Board does not discriminate in favour of Renfrewshire. Renfrewshire hotels can advertise in the short break brochure but if a higher proportion of the short break market is to be captured more emphasis will have to be given on marketing and promoting local attractions. (See the comments on marketing and promotion in paragraphs 3.5.1 - 3.5.4)
- 3.7.2 To maximise the potential of the short break market the local tourist operators will have to pull together integrated packages including both accommodation and themed activities to entice visitors to spend time in Renfrewshire. The Council's leisure, museums and cultural services will be able to contribute elements of the package and some examples of how this can be done is detailed in paragraphs 4.1 - 4.5. These services will need to work closely with tourist operators to develop this sector.
- 3.7.3 A key objective in the Renfrewshire Leisure Limited Business Plan for 2004/07 is to identify additional ways of tailoring, packaging and marketing the service to attract more sporting organisations to consider the leisure facilities on offer in Renfrewshire. This positive approach links well with the recommendations from witnesses that a key element in the revised tourism strategy should be to focus on developing integrated, themed packages for short break visits.

### **3.8 Retail Tourism**

3.8.1 The witnesses from the Area Tourist Board, Chamber of Commerce and Braehead identified retailing as one of the main drivers for short break holidays and with Braehead located in the area and with the continuing increase in the number of passengers using low cost flights coming into Glasgow International Airport, Renfrewshire is in a very strong position to capitalise on this important growth sector. Braehead has significant visitor attractions that can be exploited for tourism:

- a major retail centre that is increasingly becoming the focus of group travel market through coach and air travel.
- an eight sheet curling rink which attracts curlers from all over Scotland and which in 2005 will host the world wheelchair curling championships.

- an international arena which hosts a wide range of major events including concerts and sporting events for up to 6,000 people.
- the Clydebuilt Maritime Heritage Centre which traces the history of the Clyde up to the present day but which is currently an under-utilised resource with less than 20,000 visitors per annum.
- the Pride O' Clyde waterbus service that operates from Braehead to the City Centre.
- the proposed Xscape Centre which will have a real snow indoor ski slope and other tourist attractions and this will be the first of its kind in Scotland.

3.8.2 Braehead also has a growing coach day trip trade from Northern Ireland and beyond which provides a potential opportunity for Renfrewshire businesses, particularly local hotels, to target. The challenge for Renfrewshire will be to provide sufficiently strong visitor attractions to persuade more of these day trippers to lengthen their visit and stay in the area.

3.8.3 In his evidence to the Board the General Manager of the Braehead Centre noted that he would like to see more interaction and joint working with Renfrewshire Council to maximise the tourism potential that Braehead offers. Working in partnership with the centre and capitalising on this key visitor attraction must be a key part of the new tourism strategy. Currently much of the benefit of retail tourists coming to Braehead goes to Glasgow Hotels although the proposed hotel at Braehead will go some way to retain a higher proportion of this leisure spend within Renfrewshire. In the new tourism strategy partners will have to provide strong enough attractions to get the shoppers out from Braehead and into Paisley and beyond.

### 3.9. **Business Tourism**

3.9.1 As well as the short break market, the Area Tourist Board also identified business tourism as a major growth sector. Currently the Area Tourist Board concentrates on large conferences (15,000+ delegates) and these are all focused on Glasgow. Generally it is only with very large conferences, where all the bedroom capacity in Glasgow city centre is used up, that the economic benefits spill over into hotels in Renfrewshire and beyond. However, not all the conferences need to be in Glasgow and many more of them could be located outside the city centre. These conferences will be generally smaller in scale and many of them could be accommodated within the hotel and venue facilities available in Renfrewshire.

3.9.2 The Board therefore suggests that the tourism strategy should concentrate on attracting these smaller conferences. The new Braehead Arena has capacity for up to 5,000 people and is at present an underdeveloped resource and this offers

potential for the business and conference market. As part of the tourism strategy the Council and its partners need to work with the Braehead operators to exploit this facility more fully and to vigorously promote the hotels and conference facilities that are currently available in Renfrewshire.

3.9.3 Renfrewshire Leisure in their evidence to the Board stated that they are looking at opportunities to use the Lagoon ice area as a conference and exhibition area for the three months in the summer when the ice is not in use. Renfrewshire Leisure plan to:

- Work with the Braehead Centre to redirect any potential promoters or exhibitors that cannot be accommodated in the Braehead Arena to facilities in Renfrewshire.
- Work with Paisley Town Hall staff to redirect and capitalise on any interest in Renfrewshire from potential promoters and exhibitions that cannot be accommodated in the Town Hall.

3.9.4 This approach offers a significant opportunity to capture a share of the small to medium sized conference market and help bring additional consumer spend to Paisley Town Centre.

### 3.10 **Academic Conferences:**

3.10.1 This was identified by the Area Tourist Board witness as a potential opportunity that could be developed. While individual academics at Paisley University do run small scale events, the academic conference market is still relatively untapped in Paisley.

3.10.2 The Tourist Board cited the practice in Glasgow as a good model to copy. The City Council and Scottish Enterprise Glasgow operate a subvention fund where officers from the Area Tourist Board work with staff at the city's three universities to attract conferences to Glasgow. The Area Tourist Board provides professional help to organise the conferences and the City Council provides some limited financial assistance to facilitate the organisation of the conferences. Currently Paisley University does not actively participate in the academic conference market. This is a potential niche market that should be examined as part of the revised tourism strategy.

### 3.11 **Events Strategy**

3.11.1 All the Council's key partners in tourism - Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce, the Braehead Centre and the Area Tourist Board - recommended that the development and implementation of an Events Strategy could make a significant contribution to tourism in Renfrewshire and that this should be a key element in the tourism strategy.

3.11.2 The Area Tourist Board witness noted that currently there is insufficient priority given to events development in Renfrewshire and as a result, the Board currently has little of interest going on in Renfrewshire that it can promote either on their web site, or in their promotional campaigns, that would entice potential tourists to come and visit Renfrewshire.

3.11.3 The Tourist Board witness referred to Glasgow as a good example to illustrate how events can be used to create a positive tourist image. The City has been very successful in transforming its image from a declining heavy industrial city into a major tourist destination largely through staging major events (for example the City of Culture, Garden Festival, City of Architecture, City of Sport, the annual Celtic Connections festival and other major sporting and musical events).

3.11.4 It is unrealistic to expect Renfrewshire to create events on such a grand scale but many of the existing small events can be grown and new events created if there was a coherent, co-ordinated strategy with all partners contributing. The Braehead Arena can cater for events for up to 5,000 people but the difference here will be that the focus could be directed at Renfrewshire. Currently the arena is not being used to its full potential and is a major opportunity that could be more fully exploited for staging events.

3.11.5 The events strategy will not be starting from scratch because there are a number of existing events in Renfrewshire that would form the basis of the new strategy. These include:

- Paisley Beerfest
- Houston horse trials
- Sma Shot Day
- Renfrew Gala Day
- Lochwinnoch Western Roots Festival
- Finlaystone outdoor Shakespeare
- Arts events and exhibitions
- Renfrewshire Doors Open day
- Paisley Choral festival
- Rowing regattas at Castle Semple Loch
- Paisley Abbey - flower festival, music,

3.11.6 These events can all be grown if they are effectively marketed and promoted in a co-ordinated fashion. The existing events group covering all Council departments should be expanded to include organisations involved in promoting events in Renfrewshire. Also Council departments should be more joined up when planning and holding events so that they don't clash and they complement each other. Internal and external communications will be a key factor to take into account in the events strategy (see paragraphs 3.5.1 - 3.5.5). There needs to be a "What's On" calendar in Renfrewshire planned well in advance.

3.11.6 In his evidence to the Scrutiny Board the witness from the Area Tourist Board recommended that the events strategy should cover:

- audit of current events across the area.
- event strategy and strategic co-ordination.
- clash diaries.
- development of key events.
- funding from partners and from other external sources.
- marketing.
- website.

3.11.7 Using this framework the Council should develop an events strategy to co-ordinate events activity across Renfrewshire and maximise the economic benefits from existing opportunities.

#### 4. MAJOR VISITOR ATTRACTIONS IN RENFREWSHIRE

##### 4.1 Paisley Museum and Art Galleries

4.1.1 In her evidence to the Board the Principal Museums Officer noted that the Museum Sector is very important to tourism in Scotland. The UK Tourism Survey shows that visiting museums, galleries and heritage centres is a major activity undertaken by 58% of overseas tourists and 27% UK tourists. The 2002 Visitor Attractions Monitor produced by Visit Scotland showed that 28% of all visits to tourist attractions were to Museums and Art Galleries.

4.1.2 In the Scottish Executive's cultural audit "A Collective Insight - Scotland's National Audit" published in July 2002, Renfrewshire Council's Museum Service was held up as being in the top ten museum collections out of Scotland's 400 museums. Only two local authorities in Scotland - Glasgow and Perth and Kinross - have larger collections. Paisley Museum and Galleries is an important tourist asset and will form a core part of the Renfrewshire tourism package. The museum highlights include:

- The studio ceramics collection which is the best UK collection outside the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.
- Scottish Paintings, with the largest collection of John Byrne's work.
- Largest collection of Paisley Pattern shawls in the world (over 1,000). The textiles keeper is an internationally recognised expert on the Paisley Pattern.
- The Coats Observatory which is a fully working Victorian Observatory open to the public.
- The Local History collection and public records are used to trace family trees and this is a growing tourist attraction.
- Museum shop which offers high quality Paisley Pattern merchandise with considerable potential to increase revenue.

4.1.3 Each year the museum service stages a range of exhibitions and a wide ranging events programme takes place around these exhibitions. These have a potential to bring in large numbers of visitors and will be an important element in the events strategy. For example, the John Byrne exhibition held in 2000 drew in 27,000 visitors in 4 months. Visitor figures from the "Uncut Cloth" show staged in 1999 showed that just over 50% of the visitors to the exhibition came from Renfrewshire, 29% from the rest of Scotland, 6% England and Wales and 13% from overseas. Paisley Museum is a significant cultural asset of international and national status which will be central to tourism development in Renfrewshire but if it is to make a a more powerful impact there needs a stronger marketing profile.

4.1.4 The museum does require significant capital investment to upgrade the galleries and display facilities and carry out repairs to the museum roof. The recently launched Townscape Heritage Initiative fund could potentially be used for this purpose and this should also be investigated further.

#### 4.2. **Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park**

4.2.1 Clyde Muirshiel is Scotland's largest regional park attracting 1.5 million visitors annually. It is a not only a significant local resource but it is also a major tourist attraction drawing in visitors from outside Renfrewshire. For example, visitor statistics show that 38% of visitors to the Castle Semple centre and 45% of visitors to the visitor centre at Muirshiel come from beyond Renfrewshire. Increasing awareness about the Park and the facilities on offer is an issue that needs to be addressed if the true potential of Clyde Muirshiel is to be realised as a major visitor/tourist attraction.

4.2.2 Clyde Muirshiel can contribute to the tourism strategy in a number of ways. The Park currently stages a wide range of events - the Scottish canoe polo championships, the annual national rowing regatta, international orienteering meeting - and will be a key participant in the proposed events strategy. The Park also provides specialist outdoor events and facilities that can be marketed as part of the themed short break market.

#### 4.3 **Arts and Culture**

4.3.1 Arts and culture has an important role to play in tourism. Cultural events appeal to special niche groups that are generally prepared to travel providing there is a suitable event on offer that interests them. Cultural events can easily be integrated with the short break holiday market identified as one of the tourist growth sectors. Supporting local arts groups set up programmes is an area where the Council has in-house expertise and can add real value to kick start the process.

- 4.3.2 Small scale community based cultural programmes also have the potential to grow and in time become self sustaining and become part of the annual events calendar. This links in well with the recommendations from the Council's partners that the revised tourism strategy should focus heavily on themed short breaks and events.
- 4.3.2. The Department of Education and Leisure will be producing a Cultural Strategy later this summer in line with recommendations from the Scottish Executive and the National Cultural Strategy. The proposed Cultural Strategy should include an assessment of what the service can contribute to economic development and identify practical measures that can be put in place for arts and culture to support the tourism strategy.
- 4.3.3. In his evidence to the Board the Principal Arts Officer provided examples from other areas which showed that local arts and cultural activities can achieve real economic benefits. For example, the Loch Lomond, Stirling and Trossachs Tourist Board launched a highly successful traditional music festival where 62% of attendees were from outside the area and local hotels and pubs hosting events recorded a 38% increase in turnover during the festival. Borders Council have run a three year arts programme and market research now indicates that 55% of attendees at the events are return visitors. This approach should be an integral part of the tourism strategy.
- 4.3.4 As a first stage the Principal Arts Officer recommended that the Council should conduct an audit of local activities, arts groups and events to find out what is currently being funded across Renfrewshire to determine how best these events can be co-ordinated and promoted to support the Council's tourism strategy. The Council also runs annual events such as Renfrew Gala Day and Sma Shot Day. Whilst these are primarily aimed at local people there is potential to widen their appeal by linking them to other supporting events to draw in day visitors from outside Renfrewshire.
- 4.3.5. Cultural events can extend interest in an area and in turn this can encourage visitors to extend their stay in the area. As part of the events strategies, consideration should be given to focus arts events on parts of the year where existing tourist trade falls away with the objectives of lengthening the existing season. This approach would support the themed short break package market.
- 4.3.6. Consideration should be given to establish a cultural promoters network round Renfrewshire and develop a co-ordinated cultural circuit (traditional music, drama, jazz etc). If this approach is to succeed visitors will expect a seamless integrated package - accommodation, information, transport etc. - so it will be important to involve tourist operators and local hotels in this work.
- 4.3.7. There are opportunities to draw in external funding to support cultural networks and to help kick start and sustain cultural events - Arts Council, National Lottery: Awards for All and Community Fund. As part of the strategy there needs to be more engagement with the Council's External Funding Management Group to identify potential sources of funding to support these initiatives.

#### **4.4 Renfrewshire Leisure Limited**

4.4.1 In his evidence to the Board the witness representing Renfrewshire Leisure noted that the Council's leisure facilities in Renfrewshire attract over 1.2 million customers each year but these are primarily local residents. Figures from the Lagoon Leisure Centre and Linwood Sports Complex show that only 5-10% of customers come from outside Renfrewshire. The leisure facilities have limited appeal at regional scale so that in terms of drawing in users from outside the area they will have limited impact on tourism. The majority of tourists or visitors coming to the leisure centres will be as spectators at events so it will be in staging events that Renfrewshire Leisure can make most impact on the tourism strategy.

4.4.2 Renfrewshire Leisure has established a strong reputation for staging national and regional sporting competitions. Recent examples include:

- Scottish Cross Country Championships at Linwood
- International Ice Hockey Federation development camp in February 2003 at which teams from Norway, Italy and Germany participated
- Scottish Open Figure Skating Competition 2003
- Scottish Ice Hockey National League games are held throughout the year
- And possibly the World Ladies Curling Championship 2005?

4.4.4 Renfrewshire Leisure intend to work closely with Sportscotland and Sportsrenfrewshire to stage regional and national sporting events in the area. They also plan to work in partnership with local hotels to promote the use of leisure facilities as part of an integrated short break package.

#### **4.5 Paisley Abbey**

4.5.1 The Reverend Birss advised the Board that Paisley Abbey attracts in excess of 50,000 visitors each year with a high proportion of them originating from outside Renfrewshire. The Abbey is a building of architectural and historical importance at a national level and is one of the most important visitor attractions in Renfrewshire. It will be part of the package of attractions that can be marketed as part of the Renfrewshire tourism product. However, the operation of the Abbey depends to a large extent on volunteers so the scope for any major improvements to the services and facilities on offer will be restricted.

### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) A revised Tourism Strategy for Renfrewshire be developed by the Council and partners and submitted to the Lifelong Learning and Work Policy Board.

- (2) In developing the strategy the Council and its partners should focus on maximising the tourism opportunities arising from developments at Braehead and attracting a larger share of the business and academic conference market to Renfrewshire.
- (3) Once the Scottish Executive publishes its review of the Area Tourist Board structure, the Council should reappraise its relationship with the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board to ensure that it gets maximum benefits from membership.
- (4) Consideration be given to establishing a Renfrewshire Tourism Forum. West Lothian has adopted this approach and this model, amongst others, should be evaluated to see whether a similar approach would help co-ordinate and promote tourism in Renfrewshire.
- (5) The operation of the Tourist Information Centre in Paisley be reviewed to evaluate its effectiveness.
- (6) North and South Lanarkshire Councils are in process of establishing a "What's On" web site. Their experience in developing this site should be evaluated to assess the value of this approach for Renfrewshire.
- (7) The suggestion to "top slice" budgets to create a single marketing budget for Renfrewshire proposed by the General Manager of Braehead Shopping Centre, should be examined further.
- (8) The Council works with partners to develop an events strategy to co-ordinate events activity across Renfrewshire and maximise the economic benefits from existing opportunities.
- (9) The existing events group covering all Council departments should be expanded to include other organisations involved in promoting events in Renfrewshire.
- (10) An audit of local activities, arts groups and events be undertaken to determine what contribution they make to the tourism offer and how best these events can be co-ordinated and promoted to support the tourism strategy.
- (11) There are opportunities to draw in external funding to support cultural networks. There needs to be more engagement with the Council's External Funding Group to identify potential sources of funding to support these initiatives.
- (12) Progress with implementing the recommendations be reviewed by the Lifelong Learning and Work Policy Board in April 2005.

## Appendix 1

Scott Taylor	Director of Marketing, Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board.
John Hannah	Industries and Products Team, Scottish Enterprise, Renfrewshire.
Bob Baldry	General Manager, Braehead Shopping Centre.
Stephen Baxter	Manager Director, Glasgow Airport.
Liz Cameron	Chief Executive, Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce.
Martin Kemp	General Manager, Cosmopolitan Hotel Group.
John Lennon	Director, Moffat Institute, Glasgow Caledonian University.
Rev Alan Birss	Minister, Paisley Abbey.
Graham Biggerstaff	Head of Service Development, Environmental Services Department, Renfrewshire Council.
Jim Cunningham	Head of Economic Development, Planning and Transport Department, Renfrewshire Council.
Anne Phillips	Tourism Development Officer. Planning and Transport Department, Renfrewshire Council.
Susan Jeffrey	Principal Museums Officer, Department of Education and Leisure, Renfrewshire Council.
John Harding	Principal Arts Officer, Department of Education and Leisure, Renfrewshire Council.
Tony Finn	Development Manager, Renfrewshire Leisure Limited.
Charles Woodward	Manager Clyde/Muirshiel Regional Park