
Brand Argyll and Bute

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** The Council has identified Marketing Argyll and Bute as a strategic priority in the Corporate Plan in line with the Government's Economic Strategy. A clear list of stakeholder groups should be identified and these stakeholders consulted with in order to build the brand in line with an agreed set of strategic development objectives for the area as a whole over the next three years. The Council seeks to take a partnership approach in carrying out this work in order to ensure that objectives from all relevant sectors and local areas are set and actions put in place to meet them.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** That the Community Planning Partnership provides feedback on the proposed visuals for the brand (included) and considers including the 'brand Argyll and Bute' initiative in the CPP action plan.
- 2.2** That the Community Planning Partnership set up a time limited group to identify a list of key stakeholder groups from both sector specific and local area perspectives. It is recommended that a representative from the Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum is invited to the time limited group to share their views, knowledge and experiences from the Food from Argyll pilot.
- 2.3** That the time limited group undertake research into the potential benefits of branding the area and establish the level of interest/buy in from the identified stakeholder groups.
- 2.4** That the time limited group develop a set of key strategic objectives as a result of consultation with relevant stakeholders and outcomes of market research in order to underpin the marketing strategy and build the Argyll and Bute brand.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1** Argyll and Bute as an area is not generally recognised as a geographical entity. Public perception by those outside the area readily identifies the Highlands and Islands, the Western Isles and the Northern Isles of Scotland, but does not perceive Argyll and Bute as part of that area. However, the constituent parts of Argyll and Bute are world famous in their own right. Islay is internationally renowned for whisky, Macrihanish for Golf, Oban as the Gateway to the Isles and Mull has recently raised its profile as a result of wide TV coverage of sea eagles. These are just some examples.

- 3.2** Brand Argyll and Bute is a key action in the Argyll and Bute Council Corporate Plan however, this initiative will be of benefit to other organisations within the area and its development should take a multi-agency approach to ensure that all potential benefits are realised. A presentation will be made to the next area tourism partnership meeting in September to present the Brand idea there.

The Brand is proposed as an umbrella for existing partners, initiatives, businesses and places, supporting but not superseding them. It will serve to direct people to Argyll and Bute as a place, encouraging them to identify the area as somewhere with multiple attractions and opportunities.

- 3.3** The proposed strategy and marketing activities will be carried out in two phases. Phase one will focus on visitors and people we would like to attract into the area and phase two will focus on those who already live and work in Argyll and Bute.
- 3.4** As an early part of phase one, a vision proposal is complete and an overall draft strategy completed. The early stages of brand design have been undertaken and a successful pilot has been carried out by the 'food and drink' sector, led by the Agricultural Forum, which has been well received by the producers, the public, specialist and local media and the Scottish Government.
- 3.5** Feedback from the food pilot should be used and incorporated into further development of the Argyll and Bute brand.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1** The development of an Argyll and Bute 'brand' is a significant exercise, which should involve a wide range of partners in both the public and private and voluntary sectors. Although the Council is leading on the development of this brand, a multi-agency approach is key to ensuring that maximum buy-in is achieved and maximum benefits are gained from the initiative.

Marketing consultancy and activity is high cost and significant consultation is necessary in order to ensure long term success. There are a large number of different niche markets across Argyll and Bute, from tourism to food and drink, from leisure and the arts to marine science. The process of bringing all of these together to be promoted under one umbrella banner will be a complex task. It relies on the development of long term positive relationships between sectors and should be well planned and thought out in generic terms as well as for each specific sector.

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