

Scottish Tourism Recovery Task Force

Recovery Working Group Meeting 1 – Thursday 9th July

Present:

Organisation	Representative	Organisation	Representative
Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions	Gordon Morrison	Scottish Tourism Alliance	Karen Christie
British Holiday & Home Parks Association	Jeanette Wilson	Scottish Tourism Alliance	Marc Crothall (Chair)
Edinburgh Napier University	Anna Leask	Scottish Wholesale Association	Colin Smith
Prospect Union	Richard Hardy	Skills Development Scotland	Lawrence Durden
Scotland Food & Drink	Lucy Husband	UKHospitality Scotland	Willie Macleod
Scottish Beer & Pub Association	Paul Togneri	Unite Union	Stephen Deans
Scottish Chamber of Commerce	Mark Tate		

Apologies:

Organisation	Representative	Organisation	Representative
Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions	Susan Morrison	SLAED / P&K Council	Suzanne Cumiskey

Key Meeting Notes

1. Introduction

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Agree the working group's approach to developing the final submission for the Task Force paper
- To capture feedback on the considerations and recommendations submitted by working group members in advance of the meeting, e.g. common themes and priorities.

Several documents were circulated in advance of the meeting for reference, these included:

- Slide pack with initial feedback from the first plenary session of the Task Force on 25th June
- STA submission to the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery
- Raw evidence base collated by the STA in advance of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery submission
- Scotland Outlook 2030 COVID-19 Overlay
- A link to the recommendations submitted by the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery was also provided for reference
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/towards-robust-resilient-wellbeing-economy-scotland-report-advisory-group-economic-recovery/>

2. Working Group Approach

- It was agreed that the consolidated document, with all considerations and recommendations made by the working group, would be the base for further discussion alongside the other reference documents which were circulated to the group.

It was noted that the STA submission to the AGER contained recommendations aligned to the requirements of this group.

It was also noted that Outlook 2030, the new national tourism strategy was still current and the 4 priorities of People, Place, Experience and Business, as well as the cross-cutting themes of Sustainability and Digital, Data & Technology were very relevant. Of particular relevance to the

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Recovery working group are the 6 conditions for success, having the right policy and regulatory landscape in place, providing a strong support network for our businesses, harnessing the power of technology and data, ensuring we have access to investment, proactively investing in the right transport and digital connectivity, Successful positioning of Scotland and its tourism industry.

- As a first step it was agreed that:
 - The consolidated document would be filtered for duplication and segmented into meaningful sections under the overarching headlines of Business Recovery and Workforce Recovery.
 - The recommendations will then be prioritised and presented in a timeline which mirrors the Scottish Government Route Map i.e. Immediate, Phase 3, Phase 4, Beyond Phase 4.
 - The revised document will be circulated to the working group w/c 13th July for review and to ensure nothing has been missed.
 - The recommendations will then be developed further by smaller sub-sets of the working group.
- It was noted that some of the recommendations that have been made are immediate, i.e. need to happen now before the Task Force paper is submitted at the end of August / beginning of September, some recommendations will fit into the Recovery time frame of the Task Force and other recommendations may be longer term which will help deliver Scotland Outlook 2030, the national tourism strategy.
- It was noted that the agreed recovery plans will be actioned through the Scottish Tourism Emergency Response Group (STERG) and its member organisations.

3. Immediate Requirements

The working group agreed that there were a number of urgent actions which needed to happen now, before the submission of the final Task Force report. These actions are needed either to support businesses to reopen and to get started on the long road to recovery or to prevent the mass haemorrhaging of talent from the sector as redundancies begin to take effect.

- Extending the reduction in physical distancing from 2m to 1m for all parts of the tourism sector, particularly visitor attractions but also outdoor activity providers (including marine), boat operators.
- Extension of current / additional (financial) support packages, e.g. to protect larger businesses (>£51k RV) and the smaller, more seasonal businesses where limited / no revenue in 2020 will mean that they will be unable to survive until 2021 season, to help businesses take the necessary actions to mitigate against the risks of COVID-19, protect the supply chain.
- People are critical and retaining talent / specific skills within the sector is urgent. Upskilling and protecting the emerging talent workforce who are at risk of redundancy following the end of furlough arrangements (if not extended) needs to be a priority. Rather than displace individuals support them with development through, colleges, universities or other resources. (Reference previous programmes that have been put in place for other sectors). Example below.

Extract from STA submission to AGER:

Scotland Employee Retention Scheme- Emerging Talent Development Programme Upskilling and protecting the current emerging talent workforce. This Scotland scheme would go beyond the current timeframe of UK Furlough. A government fund that employers can access to support the

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ongoing development of rising stars who are on furlough in their employment but risk contract being terminated, or hours being significantly reduced due to pace of recovery. The fund will support the employee by way of a payment whilst on reduced hours and undertaking any leadership training, skills development, mentoring and volunteering activity during this time.

4. General Discussion

- The recommendations from the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board on measures to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 was published on 3rd July. SDS, the Scottish Government and Job Centre Plus are currently in discussions about the funding to support the recommendations of the report (as well as the Chancellor's recent announcement). The funding position should be clearer by the end of July.
- In light of the Chancellor's and the First Minister's recent announcements, Willie Macleod agreed to look at the potential timelines around the top 10 key points for recovery which had been identified. It was noted that some of the points relate to the Scottish Government, some to the UK Government and some will require support from both governments. Clarity however is required on what money is available.
- Concern was expressed over available budgets from the Scottish Government to provide additional funding. Urgent clarity is sought on whether there have been any underspends from existing funds that could be redistributed elsewhere.
- Brewers & Distillers who have diversified into tourism are not covered by the VAT cut – this should be addressed. It was noted that the VAT detail was due today. All were unsuccessful in grant schemes too due to not being seen as vital business in sector. To be included in hospitality / tourism benefits scope is a lifeline needed to allow them to open and survive.
- It was noted that most destinations have been supported in the very short term through the PERF and the VisitScotland support fund. However there is a medium to long term ask for a proper funding model for destinations which could empower them.
- There are ongoing concerns about the required mitigations which need to be in place when moving from 2m to 1m physical distancing and in particular how these mitigations will be enforced. This is being pursued with ministers by the trade unions. It was agreed that clarity on interpretation and application was required.
- The overarching need to stimulate demand quickly to prevent a negative impact on the workforce cannot be underestimated.

It was noted however that given the threat of so many redundancies people will be concerned about their job security and not on spending money on holidays or day trips or in bars and restaurants.

The importance of stimulating demand for international travellers coming into Scotland is also seen as important to protect the aviation sector also.

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It was emphasised that demand will be driven by consumer confidence – this should be a priority.

5. Next Steps

- Immediate requirements will continue to be progressed with Ministers and Scottish Government Officials by the STA and STA Council.
- All considerations and recommendations in the current consolidated document are to be filtered, segmented and given a suggested timeline. A revised document will be circulated to the working group w/c 13th July for review and comment.
- Smaller subsets of the working group will be identified to scope out the recommendations in more detail (timing TBC)
 - A subset of the Tourism Skills Group will be convened w/c 13th July to scope and build the proposition for the 'Scotland Employee Retention Scheme- Emerging Talent Development Programme'. A paper will be submitted to the Task Force Chairs w/c 27th July.
- Future working group meeting dates to be scheduled and circulated to the group w/c 13th July.