

6. FORTH BRIDGES AREA TOURISM STRATEGY

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration, providing a copy of the tourism strategy developed by the Forth Bridges Forum, of which the council had been a member since 2011. A copy of the strategy was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

The report explained that West Lothian's tourism sector made an important contribution to the local economy and a variety of statistics contained in the report demonstrated the potential benefits to communities and businesses from developing place marketing of the Forth Bridges. An increase in tourist visits was anticipated and improved transport connections would materially benefit West Lothian.

Key outcomes of the strategy were: creating a visitor destination, offering a warm welcome to all and marketing the destination.

The report concluded that the action plan in the strategy was comprehensive and inclusive, which would facilitate the successful delivery of the Forth Bridges Area Tourism Strategy, and that the council should be optimistic about the potential economic and cultural benefits for communities and businesses across West Lothian.

It was recommended that the Council Executive:-

1. Agree the content of the Forth Bridges Area Tourism Strategy; and
2. Approve the council's continued participation in Forth Bridges Forum.

The Chair suggested that officers talk to group leaders as part of the process for making sure West Lothian was better represented.

Decision

To update the draft strategy to ensure that West Lothian was better represented and to re-submit the report to the next meeting of the Council Executive on 18 December 2018.