

MoraySpeyside Tourism Activity Report

May 2015

Introduction

Prepared in early 2014 under the auspices of the Moray Economic Partnership, the **Moray Tourism Strategy** notes that tourism generates over 10% of Moray's total employment and 3.8% of the total turnover of businesses. Visitor spending in Moray is between £85m and £90m per year, an underperformance when compared with other areas in Scotland.

Looking to the future, the strategy envisages that *'In 2025, Moray will be known nationally and internationally as an exceptionally attractive destination for leisure and business visitors, offering memorable experiences, based on the area's unique assets, including malt whisky, the heritage of Macbeth, its pure natural environment and superb food using local produce'*

In April 2014, *MoraySpeyside Tourism*, part of Moray Chamber of Commerce, was established and tasked by the Moray Economic Partnership with assisting the tourism industry in the Moray Speyside area to achieve the strategic vision for tourism, including a doubling of the economic value of tourism by 2025. Following agreement on a funding package from HIE and The Moray Council, Cameron Taylor was recruited to the Moray Speyside Tourism Operations Manager post in May 2014.

Our Marketing Framework

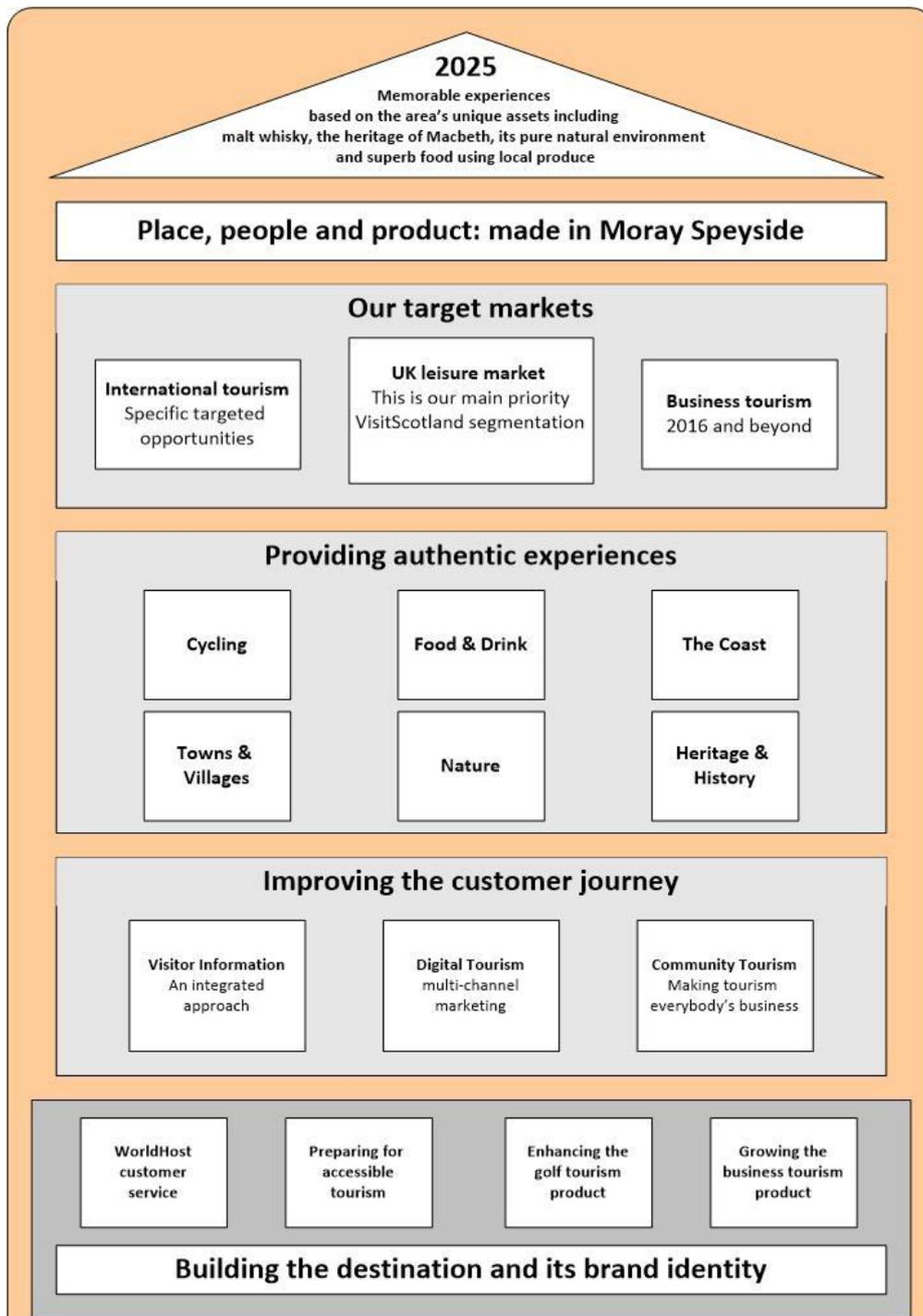
In order to translate the aspirations set out in the Moray Tourism Strategy into a programme of action, we prepared a **Marketing Framework**. The national *Focus Years* – for example last year's Year of Homecoming - have for some time provided a product development and marketing framework for destinations and businesses across Scotland. We mirror the forthcoming Focus Years in our Moray Speyside Marketing Framework, but in addition we have adopted an over-arching *Made in Moray* 'meta-theme' to help bind the focus years together and ensure that our marketing activities take a long-term perspective.

	Scotland The Focus Years	Moray Speyside Made in Moray
2014	Year of Homecoming 	Find yourself in Moray Speyside
2015	Year of Scotland's Food and Drink 	People and place and the spirit of creation
2016	Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design	Boundless inspiration
2017	Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology	The ebb and flow of time and tide
2018	Year of Young People	This is our home
2019	Focus Year to be announced	

Moray Speyside Tourism 2014-15

Made in Moray summarises the fundamentally important relationship between place, people and product, the interaction of the three giving Moray Speyside its distinctive identity. Based on this long-term perspective, each year the narratives developed in Moray Speyside marketing communications will stay true to the over-arching theme of *Made in Moray* but will evolve as we deliver the memorable authentic experiences that take us towards our 2025 vision for tourism.

Our **2015-16 marketing framework** can be summarised visually as follows.



Progress: General

We have met with many business and community colleagues in the Moray Speyside area and in adjoining areas to raise the profile of MoraySpeyside Tourism and identify opportunities for collaboration and support, as well as to promote a greater sense of self-awareness and confidence in the destination. These meetings will continue.

MoraySpeyside Tourism has developed an improved working relationship with VisitScotland, the evidence for which includes changes to maps and search functionality on the visitscotland.com web site enabling Moray Speyside to be identified as a distinct area within the VisitScotland Highland region. We will continue to seek ways of raising the region's profile in this way.

In addition we have joined the Scottish Tourism Alliance (STA), giving us access to events, information and a network of colleagues across Scotland. Our Marketing Framework is aligned with the national Tourism 2020 strategy prepared by the STA.

Progress: Project and Product Development

MoraySpeyside Tourism has participated in the initiatives summarised below:

- Initiated a series of management seminars with the title 'In Pursuit of the Perfect Visitor'. We anticipate that the seminar group will evolve to become a **Tourism Council**
- Authorship of a **Laich of Moray** project vision and a development strategy on behalf of a working group of community and heritage partners
- Supported the launch of a new edition of the **Buke of the Howlat** at Darnaway Castle.
- Supported the formation of the **Laich Coast Tourism Group**, a joint Lossie, Burghead and Hopeman initiative
- Took part in a short-life working group identifying options for the future use and management of **Grant Lodge**, Elgin
- Ongoing work with the **Forres tourism industry group**, formed under the auspices of Forres Area Community Trust
- Active participation in the **WorldHost** steering group/implementation group
- Advice and assistance to the Aberlour Community Association as it took on responsibility for running the **Speyside Visitor Centre** on a voluntary basis
- Membership of the **Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere** project group
- Support to **Seafest 2014** including collecting evaluation data on the project's behalf
- Collaborative work with the **Banffshire Coast Tourism Partnership** and the Fraserburgh Tourism Group to research and develop joint marketing initiatives designed to link the coastal strip
- Undertook an **Accessible Tourism** online course in preparation for developing accessible tourism opportunities further
- Met with golf courses/clubs, the Golf Whisky Trail and the Scottish Golf Union to discuss **golf tourism** and agree a joint SGU/Moray golf tourism seminar. The seminar took place in April and an action plan is being taken forward

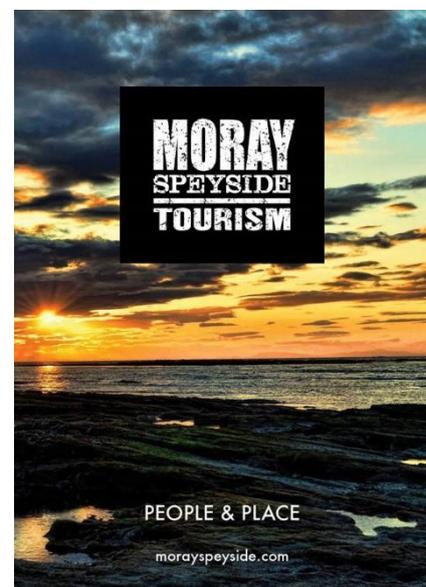
Moray Speyside Tourism 2014-15

- Participation in the **Speyside Kiltwalk** steering group to develop the full potential of this event
- Ongoing support to the joint Forres and Dufftown community tourism **Tracks 2016** project, designed to bring a group of 300 Canadians to Moray
- Liaison with Spirit of Speyside **Whisky** Festival and the Malt Whisky Trail to develop the potential of both
- Assisted **Morayvia** to refocus its vision on the establishment of a Sci-Tech visitor experience
- A Moray Speyside **Tourism Summit** was held on 31 March 2015, one year on from the launch of the Moray Tourism Strategy. More than 90 participants heard from a variety of speakers and the entire event was filmed

Marketing

Marketing activities have included:

- Launch of the **morayspeyside.com** web site in June 2014, with editorial content written in-house. Further enhancement of the web site is being planned for 2015
- Preparation of a **Digital Tourism Strategy** and associated Facebook and Twitter guides
- Proactive use of **Facebook and Twitter** as marketing tools. We have begun using Instagram and will launch a Moray Speyside **YouTube** channel soon
- Preparation of a multi-year **Marketing Framework** for Moray Speyside, aligned with VisitScotland's theme years
- Ongoing **Macbeth**-related activities including liaison with VisitScotland's film tourism manager regarding the forthcoming release of a new Macbeth movie
- Preparation of promotional/informational **editorial copy** for use by third parties
- Ongoing collaboration with Banffshire Coast on two marketing campaigns to follow up on joint development activities. The campaigns featured '**activities on the coast**' and '**cycling**'
- Working with representatives from the **Moray Towns Partnership** group to create a day-trips leaflet promoting Lossie, Keith, Forres and Buckie
- We attended the Scottish travel trade fair **VisitScotland Expo** in April 2015 in partnership with Johnstons of Elgin and the Craigellachie Hotel. The fair provided an excellent opportunity to introduce travel trade colleagues to our marketing campaign themes for 2015-16
- We recently submitted a successful application to VisitScotland's **Growth Fund** in order to obtain match-funding for activities including themed marketing campaigns, a YouTube channel, press trips and participation destination-wide in VisitScotland Expo 2016.



Marketing Campaign Themes 2015-16

Using the Marketing Framework introduced earlier as a guide, our campaign priorities for 2015-16 are –

- A food & drink campaign called **A Moray Speyside Larder**, celebrating the quality and diversity of our region's food and drink products. Our intention is to produce a guide in digital and printed format, associated promotional materials and activities and a YouTube video to be hosted on our dedicated YouTube channel.
- A **Laich Coast** marketing campaign promoting our exceptional coastline, the communities living there and the range of activities visitors can enjoy. Our plans include a distinctive map of the coast and a YouTube video.
- A **Cycle Moray Speyside** campaign, based on the growing popularity of road, mountain and trail cycling. Accompanying a new *Cycle Moray Speyside* guide in print and digital form, and the identification of up to eight cycling ambassadors, will be a cycling-themed YouTube video.
- In addition we will support a community-led campaign in the Forres area – **Visit IV36** - aiming to raise awareness of the area and promote short breaks.

Conclusion

One year on from the launch of the Moray Tourism Strategy we are making progress in a number of areas although there remains much to do. We are grateful for the continuing financial support of Highlands and Islands Enterprise and The Moray Council, and the active engagement of many businesses, community members, agency colleagues and the Moray Economic Partnership.

Cameron Taylor
Moray Speyside Tourism Operations Manager
May 2015