

## **PE1721/B**

Scottish Government's submission of 1 August 2019

Thank you for your email of 11 July 2019, requesting a response from the Scottish Government in relation to the above petition. I am replying as Tourism CLO.

### **Scotland's Tourism Strategy**

As has been noted in the petition and the SPICe briefing, Scotland's current national tourism strategy, Tourism Scotland 2020 (TS2020) was launched in June 2012. Unlike previous strategies, TS2020 has been led by the industry, under the leadership and direction of the Scottish Tourism Alliance.

The strategy focuses on driving growth in Scotland's key markets by strengthening key assets and building the industry's capabilities. Since the launch in 2012 groups and sectors within Scotland's tourism industry were encouraged to collaborate, and to shape their new strategies in line with TS2020.

### **Our Place in Time: The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland**

In addition to the overarching Tourism Scotland 2020 strategy, in 2014 the Scottish Government published "Our Place in Time (OPiT): The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland". This high-level framework sets out a 10-year vision for the Scotland's historic environment.

One of OPiT's overarching strategic objectives is to "support historic environment tourism and encourage access by making full use of our heritage assets to promote Scotland to domestic and international audiences".

### **The role of the National Trust for Scotland**

I understand that the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) is not, in itself a member of the Scottish Tourism Alliance. However, the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions, which NTS belongs to, is a member of the Scottish Tourism Alliance.

In addition, NTS is already a key member of the OPiT (Our Place in Time (OPiT) Heritage Tourism Working Group. Chaired by the Historic Environment Scotland Director of Commercial and Tourism, the other members of the group are Historic Houses Association Scotland, the Scottish Tourism Alliance, the Scottish Government and VisitScotland. The Heritage Tourism Group is the 'Asset Group', covering the heritage pillar of the current Tourism Scotland 2020 strategy.

NTS is therefore already engaged with the relevant organisations within the industry sub-sector around the current tourism strategy.

It is the Scottish Tourism Alliance which is currently leading a review of Tourism Scotland 2020, under the leadership of the Strategy Steering Group. The Tourism Leadership Group – the sector's leadership body – selected members of the Strategy Steering Group for their individual expertise and not to represent their own organisations and businesses. I understand that the Scottish Tourism Alliance will shortly be discussing the strategy review with the Heritage Tourism Working Group, covering the proposed role of heritage in the post 2020 visitor economy.

### **Economic contribution of Scotland's heritage**

The Committee requested an "analysis on the contribution that NTS properties and gardens make to the Scottish economy, both direct and indirect." Given the scope of the sub-sector we are unable to provide this level of detail in respect of an individual organisation. However, figures from the latest Historic Environment Scotland's Historic Environment Audit confirm that our historic environment is a key driver of Scotland's visitor economy. It generated £4.2 billion in GVA during 2017 (increased from £3.4 billion in 2014) and supported 66,000 full-time equivalent jobs in 2017 (increased from 55,000 in 2014).

In addition, an estimated £1.2 billion (including grants) was spent on repairing and maintaining the historic environment in 2017 (up from £1 billion in 2014). Private investment accounts for three quarters of all funding for the historic environment and NTS is one of Scotland's main voluntary sector funders, contributing £60 million. Overall, Scotland's historic environment attracted 18 million visitors in 2018 (up from 16 million in 2016). In 2017-18 Historic Environment Scotland welcomed over 5 million paying visitors and over 7 million visitors to unpaid sites. During the same period NTS welcomed 0.6 million paying visitors and over 3 million visitors to unpaid sites.

The NTS's own publication – "Our Strategy for Protecting Scotland's Heritage 2018-2023" includes the following targets:

- "To spend £57 million improving the visitor experience and condition of heritage in our care"; and
- "To increase annual visitor numbers to more than 5 million".

### **Geilston Gardens**

In respect of the request in the petition regarding future support for NTS properties, it is important to note that the NTS is an independent charity. As such the management of the individual properties in the possession of the NTS (such as Geilston House) is wholly a matter for the organisation and their Board.

### **Next Steps**

Scottish Government Tourism Officials would be happy to meet with NTS representatives to discuss how the organisation can be more fully involved in the development, and subsequent implementation of the new tourism strategy.