

## RESPONSE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, VISITSCOTLAND, 29 NOVEMBER 2012

Many thanks for taking the time to write to me again and I gladly answer the questions you raise in your correspondence of 14 November.

Regarding Bannockburn, it is important to note that the event is being delivered by the National Trust for Scotland, with additional support provided by a steering group of key partners which includes The Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs.

The capacity of the site is approx 12,500 per day and the original dates have been enhanced with a third day to accommodate the anticipated demand for the event. The event will now run from the 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2014.

In terms of logistics, Stirling is gaining experience in delivering major events, most recently the Big Concert, which demonstrated the clear ability to deliver a complex event requiring extensive transport connections and management. To build on this positive experience VisitScotland is providing advice and guidance to Stirling Council on accommodation provision and the Council is also working with Scottish Enterprise to look at increasing bed space within the area for 2014.

You also ask about timing. Extensive discussions have been held with the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs and these, along with research carried out by VisitScotland into travel preferences from the North American Market, indicate clearly that US citizens will travel before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Furthermore, the significance of the anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn provides a strong motivation for people to come to Scotland and this is supported by positive feedback from the travel trade.

Adding to this, it is important to note that The National Trust for Scotland is already seeing strong interest from clans in attending the Bannockburn event.

With regard to the digital project, there seems to have been some confusion at the Committee meeting on 31 October which I can happily clarify. The £900,000 discussed at the Committee meeting is not capital expenditure. It is instead provision for the contract to deliver specific destination management information to the Digital Scotland project.

While initially valued at £920,000, the recent contract issued to new media company New Mind - following a robust European tender process - is £850,000 over a four year period. This will allow VisitScotland to deliver an improved destination management system as part of the Digital Scotland project at a reduced cost.

You also ask about our work with third party online booking agents. As Scotland's National Tourism Organisation, VisitScotland has a positive and productive working relationship with a range of tourism stakeholders. This includes a number of independent websites and booking agents and we are working with many of them on integrating content into the new system.

