

SUBMISSION FROM VISITSCOTLAND

Thank you for your letter of 4 February on behalf of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee, regarding VisitScotland's annual updates to the Committee and issues of governance and accountability for Bannockburn.

On the former I am content with the timescales you suggest and VisitScotland's Parliamentary Affairs Manager will liaise with the Committee clerks to ensure updates are provided in September 2013 and then again in 2014.

Regarding Bannockburn, I am pleased to be able to clarify the current position by answering the questions you raised. Please note that, as EventScotland is part of VisitScotland, the answers I have given cover the work of our events directorate. I know that my colleague Paul Bush, Chief Operating Officer of EventScotland, has already written to you to explain this.

1. What is your role in managing and delivering this event (and what are the decision taking and accountability responsibilities of VisitScotland in relation to the other stakeholders)?

The Bannockburn event is owned and led by The National Trust for Scotland. Through EventScotland, VisitScotland is represented on the Strategic Group and Event Steering Group for Bannockburn, offering advice, guidance and event expertise to our partners at NTS.

2. What is the budget that VisitScotland has allocated to the Bannockburn event and who is responsible for decisions regarding its spending?

The production of Bannockburn is currently out to tender and submissions are to be reviewed by the Event Steering Group on 27 February. Once this is completed and there is a definitive plan for the event's content, VisitScotland, through EventScotland, will be able to allocate an investment from the Homecoming Scotland event budget.

This investment will be assessed against the National Trust for Scotland's event plan, ensuring that: the investment supports the successful delivery of the event; delivers a return on investment in the form of additional tourism spend; and contributes to the overall aims and objectives of Homecoming Scotland.

As plans for the Bannockburn event develop, additional in-kind support will be provided through the Homecoming Scotland marketing campaign, as well as through existing VisitScotland marketing activity.

3. How is your performance and that of the other stakeholders monitored, and who has responsibility for that monitoring?

As the event owner, NTS will be responsible for monitoring the event's performance against a set of agreed targets and measures. These will be set by NTS with input from the partner organisations represented on the Strategic and Events Steering Groups.

VisitScotland will require that an investment made through EventScotland be subject to our measures and targets. These will be set out in the offer of award letter and in the contract issued to NTS. This is standard practice and they will reflect the fact that the investment is to be used to boost attendance and visitor expenditure before, during and post event.

It is important to note that the Bannockburn anniversary is one event in the Homecoming Scotland programme - a programme featuring a number of events specifically created or tailored to encourage visitors to come to Scotland throughout 2014. Therefore, as well as assessing the individual impact of the Bannockburn event, EventScotland will assess the performance of Bannockburn in a wider context, examining the event's contribution to the success of Homecoming Scotland as a year-long tourism initiative.

4. How does VisitScotland communicate with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders on progress with the event?

We regularly update colleagues in the Scottish Government's Homecoming and Themed Events Team, which is part of the Tourism and Major Events Division.

With regard to other stakeholders, we will keep them informed of the event's development through our extensive communication channels. Key players are already actively engaged directly through the Bannockburn Steering Group or the Homecoming Scotland Strategic Group

5. What marketing activity has been undertaken in relation to the Bannockburn event, what is planned to be undertaken, at which audiences and how will the success of any marketing activity be assessed.

Once the details for the event are confirmed (following the outcome of the event tender process) a full marketing strategy will be designed and implemented in-line with the content and tone of the event. Homecoming Scotland and wider VisitScotland marketing resources will be used to promote the event to audiences in the UK and internationally.

There is also a wider marketing strategy in place for the opening of the new Bannockburn Visitor Centre. This is led by NTS and will work in tandem with the event campaign. VisitScotland will work to support this activity too, promoting this new visitor attraction which is an important investment in Scotland's burgeoning Visitor Economy.

6. Who ultimately is responsible for the success of the event?

The event is owned and managed by NTS, however, this is an important project and on that basis all partners are playing their part to ensure a successful result. This is reflected in the composition of the Bannockburn Steering Group and demonstrated by the commitment shown by each organisation involved.

I hope this information is helpful to you and please do not hesitate to contact me again if I can be of further assistance in this matter.