

UPDATE ON STAYCATION PROPOSALS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Tourism and hospitality is a very important industry for Argyll and Bute and has been badly impacted by the onset of the pandemic given the need to introduce a series of restrictions including two extended periods of lockdown where movement of people and the ability of many businesses to open were curtailed by requirements of the Scottish Government.
- 1.2 To assist with the recovery of the tourism industry and in anticipation of additional staycation visitor pressures on local communities the Council allocated two funding pots at the February budget. A sum of £500,000 was allocated to support the delivery of a range of facilities across Argyll and Bute necessary to support camping and caravan staycations. This will include provision of additional waste disposal facilities to be available prior to the summer of 2021 and other facilities that will be informed by the Motorhome and Informal Camping Survey. Additional wardens to be employed over the period April to October 2021 to raise awareness in respect of camping responsibly. A further £300,000 of investment was allocated to marketing

mitigate any potential negative effects on our rural environment and the perception of the tourism industry with our local communities. These actions will continue to grow as we respond to new pressures and can take advantage of Government funding that is being distributed by third parties through highly competitive processes which we have to prepare bids for. These actions are noted in **Appendix 1**.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members consider the progress to date and note that this is an evolving process with milestones throughout the year and beyond.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 When restrictions were lifted in late July 2020 there was a significant influx of staycation visitors into Argyll and Bute, particularly in and around Loch Lomond and a number of key hot spots. The Council worked closely with a number of agencies including the National Park, Police Scotland, Transport Scotland to help mitigate against the surge in numbers at a point in time when many facilities that visitors would normally expect to see and make use of remained closed. Actions included putting in place new

3.4.1 **Waste disposal facilities for camping/campervans.** We are investigating options for a third party to take responsibility for the new facilities and providers across Argyll and Bute have been engaged with a mixed response. Where there is no third party provider, then the

staycation visitors with a view to adjusting waste capacity and potentially providing additional sites depending on demand. The council is also looking to enter a partnership with the GRAB Trust and Live Argyll to promote a general anti-littering campaign across Argyll and Bute including interacting with local businesses, new anti-littering hubs and additional temporary staff to encourage community and visitor litter pickups. The message is leave no trace and take your litter home wherever possible, or make use of established recycling or waste sites that are located throughout Argyll and Bute.

Roads and Infrastructure will monitor the use of various sites and, where necessary, may provide additional bin capacity. The message will continue to be broadcast via social media for people to take their rubbish home with them.

- 3.4.5 **Additional Warden Posts and Staycation Officer.** Recruitment is underway for the additional warden posts with any gap being made up through overtime payments. Out of hours co5(v e)-3s3(y)10(p)-3()-3()6()6)6(tou)-4

we will also display information posters on FACTS, being Covid safe and being a responsible visitor in key locations. More localised detail has also been provided by a limited print run of leaflets, for example, on Mull.

- 3.4.7 We have submitted our own bid for additional funding to Naturescot are also working in supporting community bids for additional funding from the likes of HIE, Naturescot and other organisations as appropriate.

community facilities such as our leisure centres. The council is working with numerous partners to implement a series of interventions to deal with the onset of staycation pressures following the re-opening of tourism on 26 April 2021.

- 4.2 A number of key interventions have been put in place and staff are working to take forward new infrastructure as quickly as regulations will allow us to do so. **Appendix 1** attached to this report includes current actions being taken forward and this will be added to as and when new initiatives are identified.
- 4.3 Members are asked to note the progress made and recognise that it will take time for some actions to be put in place due to the need to comply with regulations. Wherever possible we are working with partners including CPP partners, national public bodies, community groups and the private sector.
- 4.4 It needs to be remembered the vast majority of our visitors are responsible people who respect our outstanding environment. Some people however need further help to understand what is required to behave responsibly and this is the focus of our interventions going forward together with additional measures to address known hotspots. Have a great time and be a great visitor.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy - The Council supports a strong economy with tourism identified as a priority sector.
- 5.2 Financial - A budget of £500k has been made available to deal with staycation pressures for this financial year.
- 5.3 Legal - None.
- 5.4 HR - The council has approved the temporary employment of 4 additional wardens and 1 staycation officer
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
 - 5.5.1 Equalities - None.
 - 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - This intervention will assist the local economy.
 - 5.5.3 Islands - Staycation interventions will also apply to our island communities.
- 5.6 Risk - Littering and Health and Safety issues arising from informal toilet waste disposal.
- 5.7 Customer Service - Information is being communicated in difference formats to our customers.

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