
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

04 June 2024

Cabinet

Title: North Ayrshire Visitor Management Plan 2024

Purpose: To seek approval for the North Ayrshire Visitor Management Plan 2024.

Recommendation: That Cabinet approves the North Ayrshire Visitor Management Plan 2024 provided at Appendix 1.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The North Ayrshire Visitor Management Plan provides a strategic approach to managing the impact of tourism within the area. The third Visitor Management Plan for 2024 has been informed by a review of issues previously identified in the 2022 and 2023 Plans, considers changes in tourism post-pandemic, ongoing key challenges in managing the impact of visitors to North Ayrshire and establishes priorities and actions for managing the impact of visitors during 2024. This report seeks approval of Plan provided at Appendix 1.

2. Background

- 2.1 The visitor economy is an important sector of North Ayrshire's economy. In 2022, the Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) identified that there were 2.9m visitor days with an economic impact of £229m, supporting 3,391 full time jobs. The impact of tourism is not only economic and there are a range of effects on our communities, our environment and place and infrastructure assets. Optimising North Ayrshire's visitor experience whilst minimising any adverse impacts of increased visitor flows will assist in managing the economic impact of tourism and maximising the environmental and social benefits visitors can create.
- 2.2 The 2022 STEAM figures illustrate a return to almost pre-pandemic visitor levels. This presents an opportunity to continue to review the provision of visitor services to respond to visitor demands through the Visitor Management Plan in a way that will bring lasting economic benefits while managing the impact on communities.
- 2.3 The first Visitor Management Plan in 2022 was instrumental in helping the Council secure £65,000 funding from VisitScotland to produce Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plans for the mainland and islands, which are now in place and are key to unlocking future rounds of Rural Tourism Infrastructure Funding (RTIF) and other funding streams over the next five years. The proposed third North Ayrshire Visitor Management Plan for 2024 is provided at Appendix One. Key actions include:

- Using our Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development (STID) Plans to support funding applications for tourism-related projects.
- Quarterly meetings of the Tourism Forum to support visitor economy activity.
- Developing a proposal for motorhome parking across North Ayrshire.
- Supporting the delivery of the Visitor Pit Stop project across our islands.
- Enhancing the promotion of events taking place in North Ayrshire.
- Continuing to develop the pilot 5G project at Irvine Harbourside
- Considering how our visitor management activities can reflect regional and national visitor economy strategies.
- Preparing an updated Visitor Management Plan for 2025 to continue to coordinate visitor management activities across the Council and communicate these.

2.4 The proposed 2024 Plan identifies priorities and proposals to facilitate and support an increased level of tourism and visitors to North Ayrshire, as tourism continues to grow. The process of preparing the Plan included reviewing the actions identified in the 2023 Visitor Management Plan, identifying future actions and assessing those actions against known issues and priorities. This was overseen by an Elected Member/Officer forum to guide its development.

2.5 Key impacts identified through the development of the plan relate to litter, parking and 'hotspots' such as motorhome usage in certain locations. Work is underway to review the provision of motorhome facilities across North Ayrshire. Some of the key areas identified require longer-term solutions for a range of reasons.

2.6 The pan-Ayrshire Ayrshire and Arran Visitor Economy Leadership Group (AAVELG) has developed the Ayrshire and Our Islands Regional Visitor Economy Strategy. This identifies a regional set of priorities and considers the national tourism strategy 'Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future' and the 'National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET)'. These strategies provide a wider context to the economic climate and visitor priorities. An updated Action Plan will be prepared for 2025. The Visitor Management Plan focuses on local issues and priorities, while being cognisant of the bigger picture.

3. Proposals

3.1 That Cabinet approves the North Ayrshire Visitor Management Plan 2024 provided at Appendix 1.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 The financial resource required to implement the Visitor Management Plan will be met from a range of existing service budgets and external funding. The Plan will also support external funding applications to secure additional resource for delivery.

Human Resources

4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 It is predicted that the impact of the Plan will have positive equality and social impacts.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 The Visitor Management Plan aligns with the priorities of the Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy. The proposals identified within the Plan will have a positive impact on environmental resources.

Key Priorities

4.6 The implementation of the Visitor Management Plan will support the Council Plan's priorities and strategic aims. It will contribute to the key activities of 'Ensure our places and spaces where we work and visit are well-maintained and accessible' and 'Developing and promoting active travel infrastructure'.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 The proposals in the Visitor Management Plan support the delivery of the Council's Community Wealth Building strategy. A Community Wealth Building approach will be adopted to the implementation of the Plan to ensure that it contributes across the pillars.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Visitor Management Plan 2024 has been developed and informed by engagement with the Elected Member/Officer Tourism Forum, which oversees strategic tourism matters, and with Council Services and local businesses. Regular updates on activity and progress of key actions will be supported and promoted through the Council's Corporate Communications Team.

Russell McCutcheon
Executive Director (Place)

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Background Papers

North Ayrshire Visitor Management Plan, 2022

North Ayrshire Visitor Management Plan, 2023



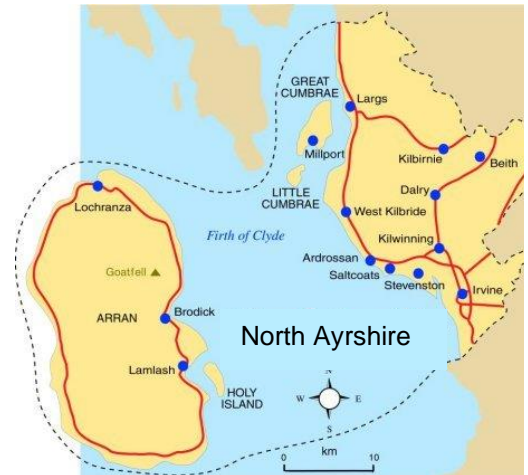
North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Visitor Management Plan 2024



1. Introduction

North Ayrshire includes the coastal towns and villages of Largs, Fairlie, West Kilbride, Seamill, Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Stevenston and Irvine, the inland towns of Kilbirnie, Beith, Dalry and Kilwinning and the islands of Great Cumbrae, Little Cumbrae and Arran. Visitors are an important part of North Ayrshire's economy. In 2022, there were 2.9m visitor days with an economic impact of £229m, supporting 3,391 full time jobs¹. The equivalent figures for 2019 (the last 'normal' year before covid), were 3.2m visitor days with an economic impact of £211.8m, supporting 3,770 full time jobs.



The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the numbers and types of visitors coming to North Ayrshire between 2020 and 2022 and consequently on our communities and facilities. While the 2022 figures show a return to an almost pre-pandemic number of visitor days, the increase in economic impact is largely due to increases in the cost of doing business and many visitor economy businesses have seen a decrease in profitability. Other challenges, such as the additional cost and administrative requirements of short-term-let licensing, have had an impact on the industry, while we continue to respond to a high number of visitors and the impacts they have on our environment.

This Plan sets out our objectives, the challenges we are responding to, actions taken in 2023 and our ongoing actions for 2024. These actions are focused on what can be developed and/or delivered during 2024 with an immediate impact, whilst acknowledging our longer-term ambitions for the area which will continue to require longer term planning, development and investment.

2. Purpose of the Visitor Management Plan

The purpose of the Visitor Management Plan is:

- to work across the Council to identify actions and interventions which enhance the experience of our visitors, which in turn support our tourism businesses and the jobs they sustain for the 2024 peak visitor economy season; and
- to develop plans which are respectful of our communities and the environment and deliver lasting economic benefits to North Ayrshire.

While this Visitor Management Plan addresses short-term issues, the Visitor Management Plan 2022 was key in helping us secure £65,000 of VisitScotland funding to produce Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plans for the

¹ Source: Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) data

mainland and islands, which are now in place and will be key to unlocking future rounds of Rural Tourism Infrastructure Funding (RTIF) and other funding streams over the next five years.

The pan-Ayrshire Ayrshire and Arran Visitor Economy Leadership Group (AAVELG), comprising representatives from East, North and South Ayrshire Councils, VisitScotland, Scottish Enterprise and the Ayrshire and Arran Destination Alliance, developed the Ayrshire and Our Islands Regional Visitor Economy Strategy and Draft Action Plan in 2023. This identifies a regional set of priorities and considers the national tourism strategy 'Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future' and the 'National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET)'. A review is underway of the Draft Action Plan to reflect priorities going forward. Combined, these strategies give a wider context to the economic climate and visitor priorities, and the Visitor Management Plan focuses on local issues and priorities, while being cognisant of the national and regional context.

In addition, North Ayrshire Council leads on the delivery of the Ayrshire Growth Deal Tourism Programme which will see £23.5m invested in the provision of marine transit facilities at Cumbrae and Arran and the regeneration of Irvine's Harbourside area.

3. Objectives

Our objectives are to optimise our infrastructure and service delivery to ensure these are managed as we work to:

- Promote North Ayrshire as a great place to live, work, study, visit and invest.
- Promote our key assets.
- Minimise any negative impacts visitors have on communities and the environment.
- Encourage sustainable visitor patterns by promoting our tourism assets and potential across all North Ayrshire, including our inland localities.
- Communicate with our visitors while they are in North Ayrshire
- Encourage responsible behaviour.
- Identify interventions for seasonal and temporary challenges.
- Create outdoor opportunities.
- Support eco-tourism and sustainable tourism.
- Disperse visitors throughout the area.
- Encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more money in the area.
- Use events to show off our assets.

4. Challenges of 2020-23 and Impacts of Covid-19

There was an overall change in behaviour due to the pandemic, which continues to impact in 2024. Outdoor activities and the spaces we have to offer continue to appeal to visitors and residents. In particular, popular destinations continue to

experience strong demand for parking, motorhome accommodation, public conveniences and an increase in littering, waste, antisocial behaviour and queuing for ferries at peak times.

Visitors

In 2023 we continued to see an increase in the volume of visitors, as there was still some reduced confidence in foreign travel which led to the continuing popularity of daytrips and UK holidays. Some overseas visitors have returned but we are still not at pre-pandemic levels. National and local visitors who discovered what North Ayrshire has to offer are continuing to make return visits. Measuring success by visitor numbers is less worthwhile than measuring success by visitor days and spend – value from visitors is a more meaningful objective than volume of visitors. Longer stays mean less impact on the environment caused by travel, and less impact on communities caused by short-term visits.

Communities/Residents

Geographic pandemic restrictions which forced residents to remain in their local authority areas led to many North Ayrshire residents discovering assets on their own doorsteps, taking to our outdoor spaces, parks, beaches, and attractions. This change in behaviour continued throughout 2023, which is a positive outcome for wellbeing and mental health, though this has also led to an ongoing demand on our visitor infrastructure and services and some impact on communities in 'honeypot' locations. Some of our spaces have experienced an increase in antisocial behaviour.

Businesses

Staff recruitment and retention remains a challenge for visitor economy businesses, which makes it difficult to meet the demand posed by high volumes of visitors during peak times. Our island businesses continue to struggle with the availability of staff accommodation. Additionally, the dramatic rise in the cost of doing business (including food, energy costs, short-term let licensing, staff, transport and building supplies) has continued to put pressure on businesses and impacted growth and development. Ferry cancellations and a reduced fleet are also having an impact on island visits and income generation for island businesses.

The requirement for short-term-lets licensing has had an impact on the market. The extra costs and uncertainty have led to some landlords leaving the market, with a consequent reduction in available holiday accommodation. Results of research in the short-term let community on Arran have indicated that not as many owners have left the market as first feared, but the additional burden on those businesses has reduced their profitability, meaning we may see more owners exiting the market.

North Ayrshire Council

The increase in use of our spaces by both residents and visitors since 2020 has put an additional burden on Council services and this looks set to continue in 2024. The Council has established a Tourism Forum comprised of officers and local Councillors

which meets quarterly to discuss progress and agree any actions related to visitor economy activity.

5. Actions taken in 2023

A wide range of activities identified in our Visitor Management Plan 2023 were delivered, including:

- Delivery of the Streetscene Environmental Skills and Training Academy training scheme.
- Streetscene operatives working twilight shifts and flexible shift patterns.
- Volunteer support via Streetscene Volunteering Strategy
- Continued improvements to the Ayrshire Coastal Path.
- The launch of a new STEM trail at Eglinton Park, with another on Cumbrae in development and another proposed at Bourtreehill Park.
- Upgrades of lighting and interpretation (see table below for details).
- Replacement and upgrades of playpark equipment across North Ayrshire.
- Participation in My Beach, Your Beach and Safer Shores campaigns.
- Ongoing bus corridor improvements.
- Ongoing delivery of the Ardrossan Low Carbon Hub.
- Enhanced promotional support for North Ayrshire events.

6. Priorities for 2024

Our priorities for 2024 are to build on the achievements of the 2023 Visitor Management Plan and keep these under review to ensure we optimise the visitor experience and wider economic benefit of tourism, recognising the benefit it can bring to businesses and communities. Key actions include:

- Updating the Visitor Management Plan to continue to coordinate visitor management activities across the Council and communicate these.
- Using our Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plans to support funding applications for tourism-related projects.
- Considering how our visitor management activities can reflect regional and national visitor economy strategies.
- Continuing the quarterly Tourism Forum to support visitor economy activity.
- Developing a proposal for motorhome parking across North Ayrshire.
- Supporting the delivery of Visitor Pit Stop community projects across our islands.
- Enhancing the promotion of events taking place in North Ayrshire.
- Continuing to develop the pilot 5GIR project at Irvine Harbourside

7. 2023/2024 Actions summary

We have reviewed our Visitor Management Plan 2023 and updated it to reflect our priorities for 2024. Additionally, there is some scoping of interventions that can be implemented in future years, recognising that these will assist the Council in taking advantage of external funding and the capability of partners to deliver services to improve the visitor experience, to leverage a greater impact in future years and develop a longer-term strategy. Projects and actions are listed in the table below and have been themed as follows:

- Litter Management;
- Public Transport, Roads and Parking;
- Public Toilets;
- Playparks and Public Areas;
- Marine Tourism;
- Communication, Education and Engagement;
- Events and Festivals; and
- Partner Engagement and Activities.

While not all interventions have been able to be broken down to a quantum of spend, this plan continues to deliver the £1.5m of action to visitor and place management actions started in 2022. This excludes the development of capital projects under the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD).

2023 Actions		2024 Actions
Litter Management (Streetscene)		
Training and additional resources		
Streetscene Training Scheme	The ILM (Streetscene Environmental Skills and Training Academy – Intermediate Labour Market Initiative) Programme ran with two groups April to Sept 2022 then Oct 2022 to March 2023. This programme has been successful. Cohort three commenced on 11 April 2023 with twelve new trainees providing additional capacity for Streetscene to deliver excellent outdoor experiences to attract visitors. Focus of the group during next six months is partnership work with the Ranger Service from Eglinton to enhance park as visitor destination.	The Streetscene ILM programme is moving into the third year from April 2024 and is currently funded to 31 March 2025. The Service intends to explore the options to extend the programme for 2 years subject to being able to secure funding.
Operational Flexibility		
Twilight Shifts	Streetscene continued to respond to seasonal demands and provide services to ensure our coastal locations are best presented to visitors.	Despite ongoing financial challenges, the Streetscene service will continue to flex resources to areas of high demand/high footfall, particularly in coastal locations. The service is also exploring the financial viability of a compactor trial for servicing litter bins. NAC's Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS) street cleanliness score has improved from 84.6% in 2023 to 89.1% in 2024.
Other Activities		
Volunteer Support	Providing equipment and support to community litter picking groups. Work continued in 2023 with volunteer groups to build capacity.	Continue to work with volunteer groups to minimise litter and build capacity. A particular example that arose with the volunteer groups was the collection and disposal of throw away vapes.

Public Transport, Roads and Parking		
Ferries	Largs marshalling works on site and funding secured to deliver Cumbrae marshalling area in 2023/34. The Cumbrae works did not progress due to revisions to the slipway replacement project being undertaken by Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL).	Largs marshalling works are now complete. Proposed improvements including queuing and marshalling area for Cumbrae will be progressed and delivered by CMAL as part of their slipway replacement plans, subject to funding.
Buses	Liaison and engagement with partners and identification of external funding to improve bus stop infrastructure, bus route extension and bus lane congestion measures. Ongoing – funding received from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) annually for bus corridor improvements.	Delivery of an ongoing programme of bus infrastructure works informed by the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy (LTATS), subject to external funding being secured from either SPT or Transport Scotland's Community Bus Fund.
Largs Town Centre Ambassadors	Following a trial in 2022 the recruitment of tourism assistants for Largs was not progressed for summer 2023. Concerns were raised around value for money and funding pressure on the car park fund. Options being explored for a suitable funding model for 2024.	Action not being progressed in 2024.
Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy Review	The Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy (LTATS) was approved by Cabinet in October 2023.	Ongoing delivery of the Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy (LTATS), subject to securing external funding.
Active Travel	Submit funding applications, secure funding and implement identified active travel and outdoor access improvements and projects across North Ayrshire.	Continue to submit funding applications, secure funding and implement identified active travel and outdoor access improvements and projects across North Ayrshire.
Transport Implementation	Submit funding applications, secure funding and implement identified public transport and transport improvements and projects across North Ayrshire.	Continue to submit funding applications, secure funding and implement identified public transport and transport improvements and projects across North Ayrshire.
Islands Connectivity Development	Develop the UK Government Community Renewal Fund funded Islands Connectivity Project to identify priorities for electric vehicle and bike infrastructure, a low carbon hub and Mobility as a Service (MaaS). Feasibility study complete. Active Travel and Transport	Implement the recommendations of the UK Government Community Renewal Fund funded Islands Connectivity Project including priorities for electric vehicle and bike infrastructure, a low carbon hub and Mobility as a Service (MaaS), subject to external funding.

	Team seeking suitable funding opportunities to implement the Islands Connectivity Study Action Plan.	
Islands Connectivity Implementation	Secure and align funding to implement the recommendations of the Islands Connectivity Project including Islands Infrastructure Fund and Place Based Investment Programme allocations – quantum of funding to be confirmed.	Continue to secure and align funding to implement the recommendations of the Islands Connectivity Project including Islands Programme and Place Based Investment Programme allocations – quantum of funding to be confirmed.
Ayrshire Coastal Path development	Improvements to the Largs Promenade and Coastal Path between Bowencraigs and Aubrey Park. Working with Sustrans to implement further phases of the Fairlie Coastal Path. Construction commenced January 2024.	Largs – Elected Member engagement to inform next steps. Technical design to follow thereafter as appropriate, informed by outcome. Fairlie – Completion of coastal path construction. Continue to work with Sustrans to progress work to provide a coherent, off-road where possible, active travel route from Ardrossan to the NAC border with Inverclyde.
Ardrossan Low Carbon Hub implementation / Ayrshire Coastal Path Development	Delivery of the Ardrossan Low Carbon Hub funded by the ERDF Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund including North Shore Coastal Path; Ardrossan Harbour active travel link; and electric vehicle and e-bike charging hubs at both locations. North Crescent Coastal Phase 1 almost complete. Ardrossan Harbour path complete. EV charging hubs have been provided at Ardrossan South Beach and Ardrossan Harbour. Electric bike charging provided at South Beach and at Doon the Beach Café, Ardeer.	Completion of North Crescent Coastal Path Phase 1 – installation of benches and cycleway markings Delivery of North Crescent Coastal Path Phase 2 (subject to external funding) Delivery of Ardrossan Coastal Quarter path (subject to external funding)
Levelling Up Fund – Active Travel Route Projects	Delivery of the active travel routes in Irvine funded by the Government’s Levelling Up Fund. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heatherhouse Road • Long Drive • Riverside Way • Barassie to Gailies Roundabout • Strategic Investment Route (River Irvine paths) 	Delivery of the low carbon and active travel infrastructure projects as part of the Levelling Up for Ayrshire – Commercial and Low Carbon Infrastructure project, subject to completion of the Levelling Up Round 3 validation and onboarding process.

Promoting Responsible Motorhome visitations	Undertake analysis of where additional infrastructure should be provided to support and direct motorhomes to the most appropriate locations.	Short-term low-cost interventions have been identified to mark out motorhome spaces at Lochshore, Ardrossan South Beach, Irvine Beach Park and Bowencraigs, Largs with funding being sought for more extensive facility provision.
Public Toilets		
Existing facilities and future funding		
Island Pit Stops	Re-purposing and improving existing public toilets (3 on Cumbrae, nine on Arran) to provide better facilities, supporting increased dwell time and spend on the islands. Consultation currently underway with the associated communities ahead of drawing up scope for each site.	Support the delivery of the Island Pit Stop project with local community organisations including finalising designs and funding allocations.
Reinstatement	Reinstatement/replacement of the Melbourne Park public toilets in Saltcoats which were fire-damaged in late 2021.	Facilities Management are undertaking a review of North Ayrshire Public toilet facilities. The next steps will be informed by this process and consider the options identified through the feasibility study funded by the Repurposing Property Grant Fund.
Refurbishment	Refurbishment of the Promenade Toilets in Largs, financed by the Largs Car Park Fund. Work began in April 2023.	The refurbishment of the Promenade toilets is now complete and pay gates have been installed.
Review of assets	Facilities Management are undertaking a review of North Ayrshire Public toilet facilities. A community asset transfer has now been agreed for the Ardrossan South Beach toilet block with ambitious plans from the Ardrossan Community Group.	Review is ongoing with a report being prepared looking at options for public conveniences across North Ayrshire. This will be informed by the consultation with community groups in Saltcoats and Largs currently underway to assess the interest from these groups in taking over the running or ownership of the sites.
Playparks, and public areas		
Upgrade and renew playparks		
Playparks	Replacement and upgrade of playpark equipment across North Ayrshire. Phase 1 complete covering coastal and inland areas.	Phase 2&3 now complete which mainly focused on inland play areas. Now planning phase 4, continuing to focus on inland play areas. Phase 5 (final phase) will be in budget year 25/26.

Coastal Hub Play Park, Irvine	New	As part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal investment at Irvine Harbourside and subject to approval of the Full Business Case, works are planned to be on site by October 2024 to create improved play facilities at Irvine Beach Park for completion by June 2025.
Renew benches and picnic tables and upgrade bins		
Benches	Programme of replacement assets is almost complete with benches, wheelchair accessible picnic benches, new bins at coastal locations installed to provide facilities for visitors to enjoy promenade areas and beaches.	The programme of replacement assets is nearing completion with benches, wheelchair accessible picnic benches, new bins at coastal locations installed to provide facilities for visitors to enjoy promenade areas and beaches.
Picnic tables		
Bins		
Additional visitor and cultural interventions		
Heritage Trails	Build on heritage trails and on website created to host the trails.	Heritage website now launched and fully operational. Funding secured to carry out a feasibility study into the creation of an outdoor museum and heritage trail in Largs.
STEM Trails	A new STEM trail is complete for Eglinton Park and work has started on co-creation of the Cumbrae trail with the local school and the Field Studies Centre, Millport, taking in the learning from Eglinton.	Identify new opportunities for STEM Trails. Eglinton Trail is now officially launched. Cumbrae is still in development with another proposed for Bourtreehill Park, Irvine.
Eglinton Park	New walking routes created, benches added, BBQ disposal units installed and information video created, enhanced directional signage installed, outdoor washroom area created. Classroom still to be completed and upgrade of all-ability play area is pending.	Upgrade of the all-ability play area is now complete. Exploring options for a covered picnic area to enhance visitors experience during inclement weather. Work is underway to create a dog park, bringing a new attraction to the Park and we will continue to develop this in 2024. The web site requires an update which will be carried out in 2024. Carry out improvements as suggested in the Visit Scotland assessment of January 2023. Work with partners to develop a programme of events in the Park including farmers markets, art exhibitions and craft fairs. Support the promotion of the Park as a filming location to assist with attracting visitors post filming / airing.

Arran Geopark	Two seasonal Arran Access Rangers funded by NatureScot via Arran Access Trust. Rangers liaise with Streetscene Grounds Supervisor where appropriate.	Collaborate with staff at Arran Geopark and Island Plan - Community Working Group to engage with the local cultural and heritage groups to influence the areas of spend associated with the award from Scottish Government and deliver outputs for the engagement.
Interpretation	Interpretation panels at Ardrossan Castle and St Bride's Chapel, Lamlash – St Brides complete, Ardrossan still in development with local heritage group.	Install the interpretation boards on site at Ardrossan Castle. Support Active Travel with interpretation along the new cycle path at Ardrossan North Shore. Funding has been secured to install interpretation along the riverside path connecting Kilwinning Abbey and Eglinton Castle, this will be worked on in 2024. Work with the local community to create interpretation at the site of the original Parish Church of Ardrossan.
Lighting and interpretation	Upgrading at Kilwinning Abbey Tower – new interpretation in place at entrance, further interpretation to follow as part of the Place Making engagement and funding. Lighting installed and in use for key dates including Go Purple and Remembrance Day.	New interpretation requires to be installed. Work on the conservation of the tower will be progressed in 2024, part funded by the Place Based Investment Programme.
Marine Tourism		
Moorings, transit marinas and step-ashore facilities		
Moorings	A payment system was investigated into charging visitors to use NAC visitor moorings at Arran and Cumbrae and a business case for cost recovery was concluded.	The business case recommended that charging be further explored in line with the development of the AGD Marine Tourism Programme projects, where third party operators will be sought to operate and manage the new marina facilities and moorings. This will be considered further informed by the development of the AGD project operating models, leasing arrangements and discussions with future operators.
Marine Transit facilities	The AGD Marine Tourism Programme has progressed the development of business cases for marine infrastructure at Arran and Cumbrae. This includes the	Ongoing. Anticipating approval by Government of the Programme Business Case and subsequent preparation and approval of Outline Business Case(s) during 2024, which will

	development of a fifty up to 100-berth transit marina at Millport and a step-ashore transit marine facility at Lamlash. Development work continues to progress with communities and stakeholders and the preparation of UK Green Book Business Cases as required by Scottish Government and the AGD to secure investment	enable further detailed development of the marine transit proposals.
Communication, Education and Engagement		
Communication, campaigns and enforcement activities		
Targeted Campaigns	Targeted info to visitors and communities through print, PR, website and social media (#LoveNorth Ayrshire)	Continued targeted provision of information to visitors and communities through print, PR, website and social media (#LoveNorth Ayrshire)
My Beach Your Beach and Keep Scotland Beautiful	Participation in educational campaigns and promotion of messaging	Continued participation in educational campaigns and promotion of messaging
Safer Shores	Participation in education and enforcement activities.	Continued participation in education and enforcement activities.
Multi-Agency co-operation	Multi-agency co-operation to gather intelligence on unofficial events (e.g., beach parties, car cruises), with interventions to mitigate effects from litter, noise and anti-social behaviour.	Continued multi-agency co-operation to gather intelligence on unofficial events (e.g., beach parties, car cruises), with interventions to mitigate effects from litter, noise and anti-social behaviour.
Ayrshire Smiles	Promotion of 'Ayrshire Smiles' customer-service training website in conjunction with South and East Ayrshire Councils.	Continued promotion of 'Ayrshire Smiles' customer-service training website in conjunction with South and East Ayrshire Councils.
5G Event Space project	Funding has been secured for Smart Columns at the Great Harbour and Beach Park event spaces.	Continue to develop a robust solution for connectivity for large events in North Ayrshire, working with partners in East and South Ayrshire Councils.

Events and Festivals		
Events and Festivals, cultural activities		
Making Waves Festival	The Scottish Maritime Museum undertook a Summer Market event in 2023.	Scottish Maritime Museum is planning a Summer Market event 2024. Work is also underway to consider a 'Making Waves' festival for 2025.
Community Event Support	Provision of event equipment for community events to reduce costs and improve event sustainability. Partially completed, some resources have been purchased and there is ongoing engagement with community groups on what additional resources are needed in 2023.	Software has been purchased to assist groups with planning and costing up events. Training will be delivered to groups in its use.
Scotland's Themed Years	Year of Stories 2022 events were delivered across North Ayrshire. 2023 was not a themed year, we await 2024 theme in order to make plans and funding applications.	There will be no themed year in 2024. EventScotland is currently scoping for options and approaches for a possible 2025 themed year which will be announced in 2024 to allow time for development of events, activities and funding applications.
Events and Activities	Delivery of new events and activities at Harbour Arts Centre, North Ayrshire Heritage Centre, Museum of the Cumbraes, Irvine Townhouse.	Continued support of exhibition programmes across the cultural venues with a mix of local artistic talent alongside hosting touring exhibitions. Building on the huge success of the Titanic Exhibition as we programme the Heritage Centre and Museum of the Cumbraes.
Event Calendar	Develop an event calendar to ensure we are promoting events in the area to build our audience and increase attendance, economic impact and community participation	An events listing has been compiled and uploaded to the CPP website, linked from the main Council website and will be used in social media promotion of local events. Going forward, a dedicated events calendar will be developed for the new Council website.
Scotland's Marine Tourism Conference	New action for 2024	North Ayrshire hosted Scotland's Marine Tourism Conference which is part of the national Scottish Tourism Month Programme and aimed at those with an interest in the marine tourism sector, whether in skills, supply chain, marketing or development. This aligns with our AGD Marine Tourism projects.

Partner Engagement/Activities		
Regional Partnership	Ayrshire and our islands Visitor Economy Strategy and Draft Action Plan approved by Regional Economic Partnership Board in February 2023 and subsequently by the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee. Partner resourcing and governance being explored for delivery.	Refresh the Ayrshire and Arran Visitor Economy Leadership Group and develop an updated Action Plan for 2024.

8. Visitor Management Plan Ambitions

This plan focuses on identifying early interventions and highlighting developments which are underway. Larger investments and longer-term projects require appropriate planning, consultation, review and implementation and by necessity must form part of a longer-term strategy. The North Ayrshire Council Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plans cover our longer-term ambitions.

This Visitor Management Plan is a working document, reviewed periodically and revised annually.

There are several strategic themes that require ongoing review and action and to be informed by infrastructure capacity assessment. In addition to the delivery of the actions in the Plan, the following priority areas will be reflected on – both in terms of identifying issues, potential action and resourcing implications: -

- Reflecting on strategic priorities identified through the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy and the Ayrshire and our Islands Visitor Economy Strategy and Draft Action Plan
- Reflecting on local strategic priorities, including those informed by the Ayrshire Growth Deal and the Council's marine tourism programme.
- Implementation of identified solutions to support motorhomes.
- Proactively identifying potential funding sources from external funders to support future activities.