

Item:  
**15**

**Report to Partnership Meeting 12 November 2021**

**RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

**SCOTTISH ISLANDS PASSPORT UPDATE**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide Members with an update on the Scottish Islands Passport Project



**Scottish Islands Passport App**

Following a stakeholder 'sneak peak' live webinar in July, the Scottish Islands Passport app was released publicly for iOS and Android.

Following feedback gathered during our user testing in the Shetland isles, functionality of the app was improved prior to release, including the new ability for users to create and store their photo journals.

We have continued extensive live, on-island testing of the app to ensure quality and there is ongoing work to further refine the geofences, user interest categories and automatic stamping functions to ensure the best user experience.

Scoping for the next phase of digital development has been completed; this will focus around adding richer sensory materials to the app (including video and audio) and creating functionality for visitors to donate to local island charities via the app. Following a tender process this work was awarded to Whereverly Ltd (aka Learn to Love Digital) who built the app and website.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> November we have 906 unique users of the app and a total of 5,846 unique user sessions (the number of times the app has been used), which is encouraging given there has been minimal marketing activity to date.

**Launch & Marketing**

Adapting to the uncertainties of 2021, and taking into account the challenges faced by island communities with both the pandemic and capacity, a soft launch approach was employed for the app.

Information on the app and how to download it is being gradually rolled out with an 'islands first' approach. Putting location-specific posters up on island has begun as well as some ferry routes in the North. This will be followed by information sharing in ultra local publications, gradually ramping up to other island transport routes. We have secured advertising space with Northlink Ferries, Citylink and HIAL and have had early discussions with ScotRail. CalMac are unable to offer advertising space at present, but we have had discussions with them about procuring a campaign early next year.

This approach allows us to engage with people already on, or travelling to the islands in order to attract more users and gather more data.

As we increase awareness of the project on islands and island transport routes, we will begin marketing the product more widely, including via social media and wider marketing campaigns.

**Engagement**

In October Kirsten was able to visit some of the Shetland islands. The trip included face to face engagement with the local DMO, Visit Scotland and HIE reps as well as a number of community representatives and local businesses.

We continue to use electronic newsletters where appropriate and have attended meetings with West Coast DMOs hosted by CalMac. Quarterly steering group meetings continue and we will soon be reviewing our meeting schedules and structures to ensure that we can keep stakeholders engaged in an effective manner.

The currently steering group membership includes DMO representation from Visit Outer Hebrides and Destination Orkney as well as Visit Scotland, ZetTrans, HITRANS, Scottish Islands Federation, Scottish Government and a community development representative from Raasay.

More widely, we presented at the 2021 Virtual Islands Summit earlier this year and have re-instated a regular schedule of social media content showcasing parts of island life.

Now that the app is live we are receiving suggestions via our live feedback loop which creates further opportunities for 1:1 and business engagement.

### **Funding and resource**

The LEADER funding period completed at the end of October. At the time of writing this report the final claim is still in progress, but we are on track to spend our full allocation.

Funding secured from Scottish Government (Tourism and Islands) will be used to deliver the project going forward until September 2023.

Work will be undertaken to identify additional funding and revenue opportunities.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note this report.

### **Risk Register**

#### RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment –

#### Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment –

#### Financial

Impact – Positive

Comment –

#### Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment

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**Designation:** Scottish Islands Passport Project Manager

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021