

Report to Partnership Meeting 22 April 2022

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

SCOTTISH ISLANDS PASSPORT UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with an update on the Scottish Islands Passport Project following the Ministerial Launch.



Public Launch & Marketing

On Monday 11th April, Ivan McKee, Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise joined us on South Ronaldsay to publicly launch the Scottish Islands Passport. The event, which also celebrated our soon to be released travelogue 'Meet the Makers', was hosted at the Hoxa Tapestry Gallery with attendance from Visit Scotland, Northlink Ferries, Destination Orkney, HIE and the Scottish Government Tourism team. The event received positive press coverage both locally and nationally.

In the weeks running up to the launch, three public information webinars were hosted, aimed at local businesses and individuals on the islands who engage with visitors to show them the key features of the app and to discuss how they can work with the project locally, including being retailers for the travelogues.

As well as continuing to work with island businesses to share news of the project locally and to display island specific advertising, we have worked with a range of transport providers to advertise with them. Currently we have a presence in a number of HIAL airports (including a large installation in Inverness which will soon go live), rail stations, Northlink Ferries and Citylink. Discussions are ongoing with Calmac.

Over the next two months there will be additional online promotional activity to celebrate the launch and increase usage of the app, and our popular social media series highlighting island businesses and experiences will continue.

Scottish Islands Passport App & Website

Using feedback gathered following the soft launch in July 2021, the app has been further developed to include audio and video, aligning with the Year of Scotland's Stories. This new version of the app, which also allowed for improvements in functionality, was released in March to co-incide with the launch activity. Content in the app is continuously being updated, informed by feedback from users and islanders.

Updates to the website reflect the improved version of the app, and encourages people to download it. Prior to the public launch, the app already had over 2,000 downloads and climbing.

Travelogues and physical stamps

In 2021 our first prototype physical travelogue "Eat, Drink, Explore" was created. Using feedback and learning from this, we have now created the next travelogue in the series – "Meet the Makers". Highlighting 20 unique islands in the West and the North, this publication encourages people to explore more islands through themes

and areas of interest. Future publications in the series will cover a range of interest areas from outdoor activities, to history and heritage, and combined will cover all 72 islands currently listed in the Scottish Islands Passport. Meet the Makers will be on sale later this year and routes to market are currently being established. Working with the physical travelogues are our bespoke brass rubbing 'stamps'. Made by N-Graved in Shetland, each island stamp features a design by local island artists which represents an aspect of life on the island. Each stamp has a story (which you can also see on the app) which is told first in the local language or dialect and then in English. Work is underway to prepare the stamps for installation and to agree a location on each island.

Engagement

Building on work last year with a wide range of island stakeholders, including a presentation at the Virtual Islands Summit, work has continued to engage with contacts from community up to national level. A presentation at the Scottish Islands Federation was well received and they have continued to provide excellent support for the project. There is fortnightly representation at the CalMac / DMO meeting covering the West Coast, and we continue to have good relationships with equivalent forums in the Northern Isles.

Two new pieces of work have recently commenced working with island communities. The first, to identify local charities to be listed in the app for visitors who wish to donate back to the islands they visit. The second is to identify locations on each island where the physical rubbing stamps can be hosted and to work with contacts on each island to check and refresh the information listed, especially given the turbulence of the last two years. The project continues to be well received at a grass-roots level.

Funding and resource

The project continues to run with 1 FTE job-share project-managers. The project is currently resourced until September 2023. We are now outwith the grant funding periods for both LEADER and the Scottish Government. Now that the project is fully launched and we are outwith the LEADER grant period, options for income generation can be tested. Additional investment will also be required and work is underway to identify sources.

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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Date: 14th April 2022