

# Tourism Strategy and Action Plan

2022-2026



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## Foreword

The North Lanarkshire Tourism Strategy sets out the vision and ambitions for the tourism sector in the area and how the council and our local, regional and national partners can best support the industry with the many opportunities and challenges it currently faces.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire recognises that North Lanarkshire has the ambition to be the place to visit and play. As a visitor location, North Lanarkshire offers distinctive, authentic experiences which provide value for money and are accessible to all; and has the ambition to do more.

Prior to the pandemic our tourism sector was growing with improved opportunities and better attractions and events. In 2019, the sector was worth £215.20 million to the North Lanarkshire economy, welcoming 1.82 million visitors and employing over 3000 people. There is a need to support the sector as it recovers and rebuilds from long periods of closure and uncertainty. Statistics from 2020 indicate these levels dropped to a value of £61.10 million, 505,150 visitors and 1,117 employed. (Source: Global Tourism Solutions: 2020).

North Lanarkshire is also building on our reputation for hosting world class events bringing additional money into the local economy and supporting jobs and businesses. North Lanarkshire is a place for active, healthy lives. A place where the right facilities are in the places they're needed - a place to enjoy.

The tourism sector in North Lanarkshire is varied and includes attractive countryside areas, market towns, around 51 cultural venues, country parks, museums and unusual visitor attractions. The accommodation sector includes around 26 hotels, across a range of sizes and budgets, and several guest houses, bed and breakfasts, camping and glamping facilities.

We have ensured our strategy is aligned with the national tourism strategy, "Scotland Outlook 2030 – Responsible tourism for a sustainable future." The bold vision of the national strategy for Scotland to be a world leader in 21st Century Tourism will require all areas to modernise their offering and North Lanarkshire will support this vision.

North Lanarkshire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and set a target for North Lanarkshire to reach net zero by 2030. The tourism sector has a key role to play in supporting North Lanarkshire to achieve net zero carbon emissions and we will continue to support the sector in this important area.

[VisitLanarkshire](#), the well-established and successful area marketing brand is a partnership with South Lanarkshire Council, will continue to deliver campaigns to increase the number of visitors from outside the area to our attractions, town centres and rural areas.

We look forward to working with the tourism industry in North Lanarkshire and our local, regional and national partners to delivery this ambitious strategy.

## Introduction

North Lanarkshire is one of Scotland's fastest growing economies with a 50% increase in Gross Value Added (GVA) between 2009-2019 to £8,090m. Our business base has grown by 24% over the last decade with 8,355 businesses based here in 2021.

Sixty-four percent of North Lanarkshire's population are of a working age which is on par with the Scotland proportion. However, within North Lanarkshire there are significant numbers of the working age population who are unemployed or who have a long-term illness or disability.

The UK economy was significantly impacted by the coronavirus health pandemic and North Lanarkshire's local economy was no exception. Around 40% of the areas eligible working age population accessed the so-called furlough scheme at some point since its introduction in March 2020. Our businesses have also experienced significant disruption due to national lockdown measures and trading restrictions which have been in place. North Lanarkshire Council has administered more than £87m of Scottish Government business support grants over the last 18 months.

According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, North Lanarkshire has 109 of the 1,046 (10.4%) most deprived data zones in Scotland. This is the 6th highest in Scotland. Oxford Economics Vulnerability Index considers a local authority's economic diversity, business environment and digital connectivity to consider how able, or not, an area is to withstand and respond to the economic shock resulting from Covid-19. This index found that North Lanarkshire is one of Scotland's most resilient areas.

Work to develop the tourism industry in Lanarkshire started with the development of the Lanarkshire Strategic Tourism Marketing Project in 2005. Since then, there have since been various pan Lanarkshire tourism strategies, most recently Tourism Lanarkshire 2020. The legacy of this work is the VisitLanarkshire brand, website and associated social media and marketing campaigns. We will continue to market the area in partnership with South Lanarkshire to build on the well-established Visit Lanarkshire brand which has grown over fifteen years of campaign activity.

This is the first North Lanarkshire Tourism Strategy and alongside continued promotion of VisitLanarkshire, our

new strategy will take a reinvigorated approach to how the sector is supported with a greater emphasis on partnership working across council services and our local, regional, and national partners.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant adverse impact on the tourism sector in North Lanarkshire. Visitor numbers in 2020 fell from 3.69 million visitors a year to 1.07 million visitors, a drop of over 70%. Similarly, economic impact from the sector fell from £215.20 million to £61.10 million, a drop of 72% (Global Tourism Solutions: 2020) Prior to the pandemic these measures had been on an upward trajectory, and achieved the mission of Tourism Lanarkshire 2020, to grow tourism expenditure in Lanarkshire by 2.5% per year from 2016 to 2020. The pandemic also affected engagement with the sector. The council provided considerable support to the sector during the pandemic through the administration of the various Scottish Government funded covid business support grants. As the sector focus was on sustaining their business and operations, participation in the member-led Lanarkshire Tourism Association diminished, and the Association eventually ceased to operate.

It is crucial that the tourism industry has a voice and influence over future iterations of the strategy and its associated action plan, and part of our development work will be to increase the number of private sector representatives on the North Lanarkshire Tourism Steering Group.

Employment in the sector also fell over this period from 3180 in 2019 to 1117 in 2020. (Global Tourism Solutions: 2020). We know through our work with partners and the sector itself, that following the impact of Brexit and Covid, there remains a shortage of staff and that there are skills shortages a range of hospitality roles including chefs. To address this, people and skills has been identified as one of our three priority themes of this strategy.

Despite the challenges associated with the Covid 19 Pandemic, Brexit, and skills shortages; North Lanarkshire is perfectly placed to take advantage of emerging trends in the tourism industry with a dedicated development officer; a comprehensive business support structure; a strong employability offering; quality learning and teaching infrastructure; a skilled workforce for the future and big ambitions in terms of realising large scale regeneration and infrastructure projects that will continue to bring fresh opportunities.

## Developing the North Lanarkshire Tourism Strategy

The North Lanarkshire Tourism Strategy has been developed by the North Lanarkshire Tourism Steering Group made up of all the relevant council services which contribute to the successful implementation of this strategy. This includes: Enterprise (lead service), Roads, Country Parks, Active and Creative Communities, Employability, Education, Development Planning, Growth Programme, Corporate Communications, and the Communities Team. The strategy group also includes Visit Scotland and Business Gateway who have also inputted to the development of this document.

We will also continue to collaborate with South Lanarkshire Council, New College Lanarkshire, Scottish Enterprise, and Skills Development Scotland as we develop and deliver the strategy. Support offered by our stakeholders is highlighted in the section below and the associated action plan.

The strategy sets out an ambitious challenge for the North Lanarkshire tourism sector to achieve continued and sustained economic and environmental growth.

Consultation was undertaken with tourism businesses and other key stakeholders in developing the strategy and its successful implementation will rely on all public and private sector partners playing their part in its delivery.

## Delivering the North Lanarkshire Tourism Strategy

The strategy identifies the strategic direction, nature and scale of the challenges involved in realising the overall strategic vision and delivering against the 3 identified priority themes. A detailed Action Plan has been developed which sets out actions against the themes and which partners will be involved in delivering against each of these actions. The North Lanarkshire Steering Group will be responsible for monitoring progress against these actions.

# Policy Context

## Scotland Outlook 2030

[Scotland Outlook 2030 – responsible tourism for a sustainable future](#) represents the longer-term industry-led tourism strategy for Scotland. This strategy, launched on 4 March 2020, defines responsible tourism as 21st Century Tourism in recognition of a global shift in tourism development and management. Success is to mean more than numbers; it's about enrichment and prosperity for residents and visitors. This mission to enhance the benefits of tourism across Scotland by delivering the very best for visitors, businesses, people, communities and environment is connected to the national aim to reach net zero by 2045, improved community wellbeing and sustainable economic growth.

## The Scottish Tourism Emergency Response Group (STERG)

The STERG recovery group is made up of representatives working together to aid recovery in the tourism sector which is worth £11 billion a year to Scotland's economy. Agencies involved in the group include: Scottish Tourism Alliance (STA), VisitScotland (VS), COSLA, the three Enterprise Agencies - Scottish Enterprise (SE), South of Scotland Enterprise (SoSE), Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and the Scottish Government (SG). The main aim is not to just deal with short term issues but to develop more strategic actions to help the sector recover and grow post pandemic.

The [STERG Covid 19 National Action Plan](#) was published in October 2021. The document is aligned to Scotland Outlook 2030 but is focused on recovery. Support is organised around proposed initiatives that include: international demand building; a Destination and Sector Marketing Fund; the Scotspirit Holiday Voucher Scheme; a days out incentive scheme; Talent and Leadership development programmes and a Net Zero pathway. The STERG Action plan also sets out the development of the tourism observatory to improve data and insights for the sector. There is also a specific action to support the wellbeing of staff, redundancy support, career advice including jobs portal launched by Springboard.

### VisitScotland

As the national tourism agency, VisitScotland's role is to grow and develop the sustainable economic benefit of tourism to Scotland's visitor economy, which it does through five strategies: marketing, events, quality and sustainability, inclusive tourism and international engagement.

The council works in close partnership with VisitScotland to align with national activity, and take advantage of initiatives and opportunities, including paid media to attract visitors, in addition to free opportunities to promote North Lanarkshire via [visitscotland.com](https://visitscotland.com), which attracts approximately 23 million visitors a year. VisitScotland is also an important source of research on visitor trends and emerging themes in the industry.

North Lanarkshire businesses can benefit from support and advice available through VisitScotland's Industry Relationship Manager, including digital reviews and access to Quality Assurance schemes, as well as programmes of activity designed to support business recovery from the pandemic.

VisitScotland's events directorate offers funding for regional events through the EventScotland National Events Programme among others, plus free opportunities to create memorable experiences through alignment with the size and scale of national activity such as the UCI Cycling Worlds in 2023 and the national theme years, including Scotland's Year of Stories 2022.

### Glasgow City Region Tourism Strategy 2018-2023

The [Glasgow City Region Tourism Strategy 2018-2023](#) was developed by the Glasgow City Region (GCR) Tourism and Destination Marketing Portfolio Group comprising the eight local authorities of: East Dunbartonshire; East Renfrewshire; Glasgow City; Inverclyde; North Lanarkshire; Renfrewshire; South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire councils.

The GCR strategy aims to bring together the eight city region partners and tell visitors about the breadth of tourism in the area in recognition that tourists do not recognise Local Authority boundaries. The group provides an opportunity to work on co-ordinated tourism support across the city region, alignment of marketing and monitoring of the sector.

The visitor offering is enhanced by including the strengths of the partners, for example, the opportunity for tourists drawn to visit Glasgow city centre to experience the countryside and museums and parks in North Lanarkshire.

### The Plan for North Lanarkshire

The Plan for North Lanarkshire sets the direction for the council and partners. Its purpose is to communicate the shared priorities and provide a focus for activities and resources. The Plan for North Lanarkshire is a high-level strategic document that outlines a long-term vision for North Lanarkshire - a vision where North Lanarkshire is the place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest, and Visit.

Through the Plan, the council and its partners are seeking to improve economic opportunities and outcomes for all. Improving the growth and sustainability of the tourism sector and marketing and promoting North Lanarkshire as the place to live, learn, work, invest and visit are critical to the success of the plan.

The plan notes the following opportunity to increase employment in the Tourism sector. "GVA per head is £16,052 in sustainable tourism employment compared to a Scotland average of £19,314. The sustainable tourism employment sector in North Lanarkshire saw 25.2% growth (from 2016 to 2017), compared to 28.7% in Scotland overall. This means that growth in this sector is slower than the national average and employment gain is less."

### The Place, The Vision

The Place, The Vision sets out plans for an integrated approach to guide implementation of the place-based investment programme in line with The Plan for North Lanarkshire. This plan highlights how consolidating investment and directing development towards town centres and communities aims to reverse the decline of the high street, create vibrant mixed-use centres, offer choices in housing and employment, make attractive well-connected neighbourhoods, and foster distinctive communities with a strong sense of place in order to revitalise struggling areas and further grow the local economy for all.

The recommendations approved at the Policy and Strategy Committee in March 2020 enabled a range of local regeneration programmes centred on integrated town and community hubs, parks master planning (as well as the associated active travel plans), and town visions to move to the next phase of physical delivery. All of these are critical to delivery of this tourism strategy making North Lanarkshire an attractive place to visit.

### North Lanarkshire Framework for Working with Communities

It is important that local people have an opportunity to engage in plans and dialogue around how they can support and benefit from tourism. [The North Lanarkshire Framework for Working with Communities](#) sets out the council and community planning partners commitment to working with communities to support local people to influence and participate in the design, development and delivery of key Programme of Work areas associated with The Plan for North Lanarkshire. Community Boards are the main delivery vehicle supported by wider and targeted engagement mechanisms to deliver 9 place based [Local Outcome Improvement Plans \(LOIP\)](#) codesigned with local communities across the main towns and settlements across North Lanarkshire. These plans contain priorities for communities of place across North Lanarkshire agreed based on extensive community engagement and assessment of data. The local priorities fit well with the wider strategic context, cross cutting priorities for North Lanarkshire and reflect some of the local challenges and opportunities associated with tourism in North Lanarkshire. While some of the priorities are undoubtedly grounded in a desire to reduce inequalities, support the most vulnerable and tackle poverty there are threads throughout the plans around making it easier for people to visit, access and use services, facilities and amenities in North Lanarkshire that can support and link to a successful tourism strategy and framework for example

- Covid Recovery and Renewal
- Public and Community Transport
- Quality of environment and greenspace
- Communication and Engagement

### Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan

The [North Lanarkshire Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan](#) is aligned to the Plan for North Lanarkshire and sets out the council's capital investment priorities for inclusive economic growth. This policy framework ensures that there is an integrated approach to investing in four key, inter-related areas: Housing supply, Town centres, Business and industry, Infrastructure. This framework focuses activities and resources across these areas as we realise large-scale regeneration and investment projects throughout North Lanarkshire. It will enable and deliver new homes, reshape our town centres, attract investment and jobs and deliver the digital and physical infrastructure we need to support inclusive economic growth.

### Workforce for the Future Strategy

Building a skilled workforce for the future plays a significant part in delivering The Plan for North Lanarkshire and our ambition statement to build a workforce for the future capable of delivering upon our priorities and shared ambition. [The Workforce for the Future Strategy](#) sets out an integrated plan to build a workforce for the future through ensuring our education curriculum, skills and employability services support the aspirations and skills of those seeking employment and that this support is aligned to North Lanarkshire's current and future business needs. This alignment is critical to the recovery and growth of the tourism sector.

### Communications Plan 2021 - 2022

North Lanarkshire Council's [Communications plan 2021 – 2022](#) includes a commitment to the Visit Here brand campaign by promoting our museums, exhibitions, country parks and green spaces to a local and wider audience, and supporting participation in our arts programme with a key message of "There's so much to do right on your doorstep". VisitLanarkshire will continue to work with Corporate Communications to better understand the needs of the sector and undertake area and attraction campaigns.



### Events Strategy

The [North Lanarkshire Events Strategy](#) sets out our aim to prioritise events which can have a measurable impact on: economic benefit, tourism, community participation, delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and exposing North Lanarkshire to a national and international audience. By marketing the area to sport and event organisations as well as businesses, we hope to generate interest in hosting major events and conferences in North Lanarkshire.

We have an established history of hosting large scale events including Glasgow European Championships 2018, Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014, the Tour Series, the 2011 International Children's Games and the 2017 British Transplant Games.

### Local Development Plan

[The Local Development Plan \(LDP\)](#) sets out policies and proposals to guide North Lanarkshire's land use strategy for the next 5 to 10 years.

Specifically, "Planning Policy 2C Visitor Economy Areas and Locations" identifies:

- **Visitor Economy Areas** in the: Kilsyth Hills and Kelvin Valley, Palacerigg Country Park, North Lanarkshire Canals, Drumpellier Country Park / Seven Lochs Wetland Park and Strathclyde Country Park.
- **Visitor Economy Locations:** Auchinstarry, Broadwood, Time Capsule, Summerlee, Ravenscraig regionals sports centre and Wishaw sports centre.

The Policy supports balancing the benefits from the sustainable economic growth of the Visitor Economy and any impacts arising that could compromise the character of an area or location. The Local Development Plan recognises that the limited introduction of a range of ancillary activities can be appropriate to maintain and support the operation of the Visitor Economy Locations. However ancillary proposals with high footfall remain subject to the town centres first sequential approach. It is important that any proposed investments considered should be in keeping with the local development plan.

Visitor Economy related proposals may also be appropriate in "Countryside PP5" areas, which are mostly located in the eastern side of North Lanarkshire, characterised by high moorland. The policy will resist pressure for sporadic and isolated development in the Countryside while protecting local landscapes and

encouraging the creation and jobs and services to serve Countryside communities. Any proposals will require an assessment of appropriateness including a business plan to be carried out.

## North Lanarkshire's Tourism Strategy - Vision and Priority Themes

The North Lanarkshire Tourism Strategy aims to grow the value and positively enhance the benefits of tourism across North Lanarkshire by delivering the very best for our visitors, our businesses, our people, our communities, and our environment. It links closely with the national tourism strategy: [Scotland Outlook 2030 – Responsible tourism for a sustainable future](#) and seeks to work closely with tourism businesses in North Lanarkshire in order to build business resilience, sustainability, and profitability; attract, develop, and retain a skilled, committed, diverse and valued workforce; and create and develop an attractive, competitive, and sustainable destination that offers authentic and memorable experiences.

During the development of the North Lanarkshire Tourism Strategy three priority themes were identified: Business, People and Skills and Place.

**Our Shared Vision:** By 2026 North Lanarkshire will be a sustainable, resilient tourist destination offering a range of authentic and memorable experiences which provide value for money and are accessible to all.

## Priority 1 – Business

### **We will build business resilience, sustainability, and profitability.**

North Lanarkshire has a dynamic, diverse and growing economy with a great mix of small, medium-sized and large businesses. People in North Lanarkshire are connected to employment and have the support they need to access jobs. They have skills appropriate to the needs of employers. They are supported, no matter their background, personal needs or economic circumstances. We provide great places to work, with engaged, ambitious people who are ambassadors for the services they provide.

The disruption caused by the pandemic and decreasing participation in the Lanarkshire Tourism Association has resulted in the group folding, so we will have to develop new relationships with the sector and find smarter ways of connecting and providing training and support to the sector.

North Lanarkshire has a strong business support offering available to the tourism sector through the council including its Business Gateway service and employability and business support programmes, and the wide range of support delivered through local, regional and national agencies.

To deliver memorable and authentic experiences to our tourists and visitors, we must ensure businesses are supported to reach their full potential. We will build business resilience, sustainability, and profitability in the tourism sector by delivering on the following key actions outlined in the associated Action Plan:

- Supporting businesses to take advantage of training and development opportunities
- Promoting funding and investment opportunities to the sector, including LA grants and other grant and loan possibilities.
- Supporting the adoption of new technologies
- Keeping up to date with insights into visitor behaviour and trends
- Supporting appropriate investment and growth in tourism development areas
- Supporting businesses to deliver high quality memorable experiences which benefit visitors and the places they visit

- Encouraging businesses to procure locally and encourage local spend
- Establishing measures to help tourism businesses modernise practices to become more sustainable

## Priority 2 – People and Skills

### **We will attract, develop, and retain a flexible, resilient, and skilled workforce.**

Tourism is a people industry and therefore a focus on jobs and skills is essential to the success of tourism in North Lanarkshire. Over the last ten years, North Lanarkshire's labour market has suffered from several challenging skills and employability barriers which have impacted on its ability to respond to the emerging workforce demands in its growing economy.

We are committed to making North Lanarkshire a great place to work and learn, are committed to promoting Fair Work and driving forward measures to support employers to embed fair working practices; but recognise that the tourism and leisure sector often use zero-hour contracts to meet the needs of the business and can require working antisocial hours. We should also consider the opportunities in the sector for older people returning to work, or changing career, who may find the flexibility and working hours suitable. With relatively low rates of pay, compared with other occupations, the desirability of working in the sector is reduced. There are national recruitment and skills issues in the tourism sector as a result of the combination of the impact of Brexit and the COVID 19 pandemic. This has resulted in a lack of chefs and other hospitality staff. In response to this, employers should be advised of the benefits of the fair work agenda in recruiting and retaining skilled staff.

Despite these challenges, North Lanarkshire's future labour market profile shows a real job growth which directly supports our future ambitions. However, our persistent skills and qualifications gaps threaten to undermine our ability to take full advantage of this growth, and if we fail to tackle them, then many of our residents and young people will simply be excluded from the opportunities as they arrive.

We will attract, develop, and retain a flexible, resilient, and skilled workforce. The Workforce for the Future Strategy sets out a plan to build a flexible, resilient, and skilled workforce, that address current and future workforce demands across North Lanarkshire. Addressing this misalignment in our labour market will require us to build a strong and effective partnership between our schools; our employers; our skills and employability agencies and our further and higher education institutions. For the tourism sector this must be a partnership which fully engages all agencies in working together, to build effective employability services in known areas of labour shortages and growth.

- Supporting tourism assets to deliver high quality memorable experiences
- Delivering area marketing activity to encourage visitors to explore the area throughout the year
- Supporting venues to be inclusive and accessible destinations enabling all visitors to travel widely and enjoy the full range of visitor experiences

## North Lanarkshire Assets: Our Strengths

### Priority 3 – Place

**We will create and develop an attractive, competitive, and sustainable destination that offers authentic and memorable experiences.**

The Plan for North Lanarkshire sets out the following vision for what it means to visit the area. “North Lanarkshire is the place to visit and play. Our tourism sector is growing with improved opportunities and better attractions and events. We offer distinctive, authentic experiences which provide value for money and are accessible to all.”

Part of the development of place is in recognition that tourism in North Lanarkshire is also beneficial for local communities. The concept of ‘Tourism is everyone’s business,’ recognises the shared interests of businesses, residents, and visitors in having an attractive and well serviced environment.

North Lanarkshire is the place to visit and play. We have a wealth of tourism assets including a range of cultural and heritage attractions; a large rural offering; world class sport, leisure, and event venues; and natural and historic assets.

We will create and develop an attractive, competitive, and sustainable destination that offers authentic and memorable experiences through delivering on the following key actions outlined in the associated Action Plan:

- Ensuring council owned venues are developed to manage tourism effectively and responsibly

#### Cultural tourism

North Lanarkshire has many strengths, the strong built heritage of our towns is protected by over 300 listed buildings. There are seven conservation areas with enhanced planning oversight and design guidance to protect the character of the historic design. Cumbernauld Village had a chapel by the thirteenth century and uses the classic form of a Scottish Medieval town. Traditional shop fronts remain and historic features such as the Lang riggs (land for subsistence farming owned by individual families. Kilsyth, established in the 17th century, grew after the development of the Forth and Clyde Canal and the Kelvin Valley Railway line. The town centre uses the traditional Scottish market town layout of a simple main street widening to form a square, is varied in Kilsyth’s case by Market Square lying around a corner.

The preindustrial industries of linen production and cotton weaving developed into coal mining and quarrying, and then iron and steel production predominantly in Motherwell and Coatbridge. This gave rise to the term the Iron Burgh. This social history is of interest to locals and also the growing diaspora across the world who look to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors.

Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life is a unique celebration of the industrial and social history of the area and welcomes over 180,000 visits per year and is one of the top twenty most visited museums in the whole of Scotland. Summerlee Museum is a unique asset, telling the stories of ordinary working people in the West of Scotland, in a remarkable and inclusive way. Summerlee Museum boasts 20 acres of outdoor space, historic tram rides, adventure play park and a schedule of events and guided tours.

We should capitalise on North Lanarkshire's place within the larger international context. Scotland's UNESCO trail will provide a national focus on the Antonine Wall as a destination. Similarly, the John Muir Way has international as well as local and regional interest, especially from North America.

### Country Parks

North Lanarkshire is home to a wide range of opportunities for the promotion of leisure activities that can benefit the health and wellbeing of individuals - this includes 6 country parks and gardens, 6 town parks, 9 local nature reserves, over 350 sites of importance for nature conservation, and 171 play areas.

Country Parks for the Future is one of three key strands of development within the One Place-One plan approach. Alongside Town hubs it outlines our shared ambition to update and upgrade public spaces to make them fit for current and future needs. It was developed in partnership with the community from 2018 to 2020.

Strathclyde Country Park, Drumpellier Country Park and Palacerigg Country Park are the focus of our Country Parks for the Future programme, and each has a strategic masterplan with an ambitious ten-year vision.

There are a range of key tourism opportunities within these plans:

- Drumpellier is the Gateway to the Seven lochs project, an ambitious landscape wide restoration initiative.
- Strathclyde Park is committed to being zero carbon by 2030, leading the way, and becoming an exemplar for other parks within North Lanarkshire and Scotland.
- A green energy generating project at Strathclyde Park has been selected for support from the Green Growth Accelerator Programme and involves the installation of water source heat pump and solar canopies that will make the park and watersports centre carbon neutral and could eventually generate green energy to power nearby homes.
- Electric vehicle charging hub installed at Strathclyde Country Park can be utilised by community groups and tourist in an inclusive and responsible way.
- A series of 'art bothies' will be created to support education within the Strathclyde Park while also offering artist residency opportunities throughout the summer.

- Heritage assets are hidden throughout our parks yet are sorely underutilised. Over the next ten years that is set to change as our parks become 'ecomuseums' at the heart of Scotland.
- To encourage families to come to the parks a series of improvements will be made to the current Country Park play facilities, with varying activities available within and around them.
- All parks will be accessible to as many individuals and user groups as possible, encouraging outdoor activities, health and well-being.

Each Park's Masterplan details projects we aspire to develop and deliver over the next 10 years. Most of the projects have a strong, direct link to increasing visits, whether this is from local people or tourists.

### Events and festivals

North Lanarkshire has world class facilities at Ravenscraig Regional Sports facility, which regularly hosts events in the indoor athletics and pitch facilities. The centre is home to Scotland's national rugby sevens team and previously hosted the 2011 International Children's Games and the 2017 British Transplant Games. We are also perfectly placed to take advantage of campaigns and other opportunities to align with the UCI Cycling Worlds 2023 in order to increase the visitor and community profile of North Lanarkshire's leisure cycling offer. Our events strategy sets out how we can support events with a national and international profile.

Our three Country Parks host a range of cultural and sporting events for local, national and international audiences, including Strathclyde Country Park's recent hosting of the 2014 Commonwealth Games triathlon event and 2018 European Championships rowing and triathlon events. Strathclyde Park's rowing course is the only international standard course in Scotland and hosts the annual Scottish Rowing championships and regularly hosts British and Home Nations championships.

As well as sporting events, a range of conferencing facilities are available in the area. Although business tourism has been curtailed by the pandemic and conferences in the future are likely to use a blend of online and in person. Facilities include the DoubleTree by Hilton Glasgow Westerwood Spa & Golf Resort, which can host up to 400 delegates; Dakota Hotels Eurocentral which has a range of suites that can accommodate up to 100 delegates; council owned facilities like Motherwell Concert

Hall and Summerlee can host a variety of meetings and events and Ravenscraig Regional Sport Facility which has a flexible conference and exhibition space.

Motherwell Concert Hall and Theatre plays host to numerous theatrical shows, national performing companies, works' dances and national icons. Refurbished in 2011, Motherwell Theatre is a 392 fixed seat auditorium and Motherwell Concert Hall is a flexible space that can accommodate up to 1,600 for a standing event and up to 1,008 for a seated event. Following the impact of COVID 19, huge strides forward have been made in scheduling a comprehensive events schedule that includes fabulous live music, comedy, engaging theatre, dance performances and other memorable experiences.

### Sport and Leisure

North Lanarkshire Council manages 18 sport and leisure centres that include eight 25m swimming pools, world class gym facilities, an ice-skating rink, an outdoor athletics tracks, a state-of-the-art BMX track, soft play facilities, two top of the range golf courses and the Time Capsule Waterpark. The Time Capsule is home to Scotland's waterpark where visitors can experience two 100m long twisting twin flumes, wave pools, and the only indoor water ride in Scotland where four people can travel together.

### Natural and Historic Assets

As well as visitor attractions we have a well-established network of walking and cycling routes. The Antonine Wall World Heritage Site offers some of the best walks and is easily accessible at Auchinstarry and Castlecary. The recently created Arniebog distance stone and the award-winning Silvanus sculpture, a towering metal depiction of a Roman soldier's head have created a destination for walkers and brings the area's roman heritage to life.

Kilsyth and the Kelvin Valley is an attractive and underutilised rural area and the tourism potential of the area was the focus of the [Kilsyth and Kelvin Valley Framework and action plan](#). The Kelvin Valley possesses a broad range of visitor attractions including: Forth and Clyde Canal, Colzium Estate and Visitor Centre, Antonine Wall World Heritage Site, Dumbreck Marshes, Banton Loch, Dullatur Nature Reserve and a well-developed path network. Projects to improve the user experience and facilities in this area include plans for the derelict

Craigmarloch stables as a facility to provide a much-needed rest stop and destination along the walking route.

### Food and Drink

North Lanarkshire has many vibrant and award-winning eating and drinking places, with a range of food and drink experiences to suits all tastes - from farm shops and butchers to gourmet restaurants and bars. The recently created food and drink network, [Lanarkshire's Larder](#) is increasing in membership and will create food trails to showcase local producers and restaurants. It is recognised that consumers prefer to know the origin and provenance of food and are willing to pay more for this experience. Tourism businesses can also sign up to be part of Taste Our Best – an accreditation scheme run by Visit Scotland which celebrates businesses who service up locally sources, quality food and drink. The scheme requires a menu to demonstrate a percentage of ingredients from local producers and this is acknowledged on the menu and badged accordingly.

## Improving the customer journey

### Customer experience

The tourism and visitor experience in North Lanarkshire must be authentic and memorable. Businesses in the area have built a reputation for delivering great customer service and we will continue to support service excellence training and development. An example is the 'BeLanarkshire' training programmes which seek to improve customer service skills and encourage the tourism sector be ambassadors for Lanarkshire. We also support businesses to participate in Visit Scotland's Quality Assurance. Increased use of digital technologies and social media channels, e-commerce and e-ticketing will also enhance the customer experience during a visit. It is therefore important that we promote Business Gateway services, including Digitalboost and Expert Help Framework, and our business support grant funds to ensure businesses have the skills and capability to provide those digital products and services.

### Digital Infrastructure

Investment in gigabit capable broadband is critical for the visitor experience. Improved digital connectivity is central to North Lanarkshire's economic growth. We are progressing measures to vastly enhance the digital network across North Lanarkshire delivering faster speeds, choice and superior reliability. This will ensure visitors and tourists have reliable access to information and services, enabling the delivery of improved customer service and the streamlined management of data and business processes. This will include the availability of free WiFi within our town centres and across our cultural and leisure venues. An extensive fibre network will allow quicker and more reliable access to cloud-based services and enable fixed and wireless networks to work together to deliver the benefits of 5G. Digital connectivity will also help spread economic benefits and facilitate the development of North Lanarkshire's tourism offer by providing more interactive customer experiences.

### Town Centre Visions

North Lanarkshire has eight established town centres, each with its own distinctive features and identities. A major programme of work is planned in our town centres with town visions setting the scene for modernisation programme to create mixed use town and community hubs. A range of services will be located in the hubs, including leisure, education, public services and commercial units. We are proposing to reposition our towns as mixed-use spaces, promoting town centre living and putting staff and services closer to communities. This will radically change our eight town centres and make them more attractive places to live and visit. The plans aim to create sustainable futures for town centre areas in recognition of the decline of retail.

### City Deal

Many opportunities for investment through the Glasgow City Region City Deal Programme are now progressing to project completion stage. The Pan Lanarkshire orbital transport corridor, linking the M74 in the south with the M80 in the north, is a project investment of more than £215M in the transportation network. This project includes the east Airdrie link road and the Ravenscraig access infrastructure project, which is linked to projects creating a new town park and active travel routes.

Working in partnership with Network Rail we are

upgrading Motherwell train station to become a transport hub connecting the town to the wider national rail network and routes to London. This £14.5 million redevelopment of the station is complemented by improvements to Muir Street supported by Glasgow City Region City Deal. This work will make the town much more accessible by public transport and increase opportunities for overnight stays and business tourism.

### VisitLanarkshire

VisitLanarkshire is an area marketing brand delivered in partnership between North and South Lanarkshire Councils. The brand is well established, and we intend to continue with this partnership arrangement alongside any work to specifically develop North Lanarkshire's offering. The primary focus for VisitLanarkshire is to promote to areas within easy travel time, highlighting opportunities for day trips and short breaks. The brand is promoted out with the peak season to help maximise the potential economic impact of tourism across the area. Plans are underway to update the VisitLanarkshire website to reflect the style of similar area marketing websites and make the site more appealing to users. Current messaging and imagery is based around four themes: less travel time, more time to play, more time together, more time for yourself, and more family time. Marketing activities include:

- Development of the VisitLanarkshire website ([www.visitlanarkshire.com](http://www.visitlanarkshire.com)). The website receives over 700,000 annual users and provides an additional marketing opportunity for individual businesses as well as promoting Lanarkshire as a destination of choice. The site includes short promotional films, visitor day trip itineraries, events feed via the List and inclusion of venues. The new site will retain such features.
- The delivery of shoulder season campaign activity including radio, outdoor (bus advertising and sites in and around train stations) and digital advertising. Campaigns target Glasgow and the central belt.
- The production and distribution of 110,000 "Great Days Out in Lanarkshire" guides around central Scotland. This is currently being reviewed and more effective alternatives are being considered.

### Net Zero / Sustainable Growth

The climate emergency is a focus for everything from personal choices to national and global targets. North Lanarkshire declared a climate emergency in 2019 with an ambitious target for North Lanarkshire to reach net zero by 2030. North Lanarkshire ACT 21 (Action on Climate Together) set out a roadmap for action to curb climate change. The council and its partners through the Act Now North Lanarkshire Initiative aim to provide advice to residents and businesses to act on climate change.

There are a number of ways tourism businesses can contribute to achieving net zero. For example, participating in a green tourism scheme can facilitate energy reduction, result in food waste reductions and also allow visitors to make informed decisions about the sustainable credentials of the businesses they choose.

Many visitors travel by electrical vehicle and the demand for accessible charging points will continue to grow. Investment continues in facilities across North Lanarkshire. For example, Strathclyde Country Park has an electrical vehicle charging hub which is a real asset for the many people who visit the Park. It was also the first electric vehicle (EV) charging hub in Scotland delivered through a strategic partnership with the Scottish Government and electricity network companies.

### Accessibility

North Lanarkshire has partnered with AccessAble to create, host and update detailed access statements for hotels and attractions, and for a huge range of local businesses and transport hubs in the area. Access statements allow visitors with a disability to view detailed information before travelling, to make an informed choice about the facilities and access of the venue. Staff training in this area is crucial to the visitor experience.

It is important that we welcome all visitors and recognise that around a fifth of people in Scotland describe themselves as having a disability. In many cases small adaptations and welcoming staff can result in an excellent customer experience and return bookings.

### Scotland Loves Local

The Scotland Loves Local campaign is a national initiative designed to encourage all those who live in Scotland to think local first and support their high streets safely and in line with public health guidelines. North Lanarkshire

businesses including those in the tourism and hospitality sector can now also participate in the Scotland Loves Local Gift Card scheme which is an innovative new way of keeping spend local for longer in every community and region across Scotland.

# Action Plan

The aims of this strategy will be developed into an associated action plan with SMART objectives attached to the work of council services able to work to achieve them. The Action Plan will be monitored, and work carried out by the members of the North Lanarkshire Tourism Steering Group.

## 1. Business

<b>Theme: Business</b>						
Aim: We will build business resilience, sustainability, and profitability						
	Key Action	Brief Description of detailed actions	Target	Baseline	Timescale	Lead
1.1	We will support businesses to take advantage of training and development opportunities	<p>Provide free business support services to start up and existing tourism businesses through Business Gateway Lanarkshire.</p> <p>Businesses from the tourism sector can access 1:1 support and tailored advice from an experienced local business adviser, attend webinars and events, and receive bespoke market research.</p> <p>Provide up to up to 21 hours of free expert consultancy support to support the development of tourism businesses working with Business Gateway Lanarkshire through the Expert Help Framework.</p>	N/A	N/A	Ongoing	Business Gateway Lanarkshire
			<p>Deliver programme to SMEs over 2-years across 11 lots: Business Financial Management; Business Strategy and Business Resilience; Human Resources, Leadership and Skills; Procurement; Marketing and Digital Marketing; Digital Development; Internationalisation, Business Innovation; Legal Support; Research, Development and Design and Low Carbon Support</p>	New Programme	Annual	Business Gateway Lanarkshire – Expert Help Framework



<b>Theme: Business</b>						
<b>Aim: We will build business resilience, sustainability, and profitability</b>						
<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Brief Description of detailed actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead</b>	
1.1	We will support businesses to take advantage of training and development opportunities	Support tourism business to improve digital skills and access the Digital Boost service through Lanarkshire Business Gateway. This support includes 1:1 advice, coaching and events. Encourage tourism business to become members of relevant local membership organisations including the Lanarkshire Larder the Lanarkshire Business Hub, Lanarkshire Chamber of Commerce or Federation of Small Businesses. Signpost tourism businesses to support them to achieve net zero targets including: Visit Scotland's: Scotland's Pathway to Net Zero and Zero Waste Scotland.	Increase the number of tourism businesses increasing their digital skills  Increase the number of NL tourism business who are members of local organisations  N/A	N/A  N/A  N/A	Ongoing  Ongoing  Ongoing	NLC Enterprise/ Lanarkshire Business Gateway  NLC – Tourism Steering Group  NLC – Tourism Steering Group
1.2	We will actively promote funding and investment opportunities to the sector, including council grants and other grant and loan possibilities.	Promote the VisitScotland Scotspirit holiday vouchers scheme to local tourism businesses to support unpaid carers and low income families, and increase footfall/occupancy. Promote the council's Back to Business and Business Recovery and Growth Funds and any subsequent NLC funding opportunities to Tourism Businesses. Promote Business Loans Scotland loan funding to Tourism Business to support business start-up, business growth and working capital.	10 additional businesses participating in the Scotspirit holiday vouchers scheme.  Award grants to eligible tourism businesses  Promote Business Loans Scotland funding to appropriate tourism businesses	N/A  N/A  N/A	March 2023  Ongoing	NLC – Tourism Steering Group  NLC - Enterprise  Business Loans Scotland
1.3	We will keep up to date with insights into visitor behaviour and trends	Build awareness of changing consumer demand and support businesses through VisitScotland's industry recovery programmes to develop the products visitors want, via their preferred channels. Consult with business within the North Lanarkshire tourism sector to support the formation of effective collaborations.	Deliver the Moment for Change recovery programme.  Recruit business representatives onto the NL Tourism steering group.	N/A  N/A	Ongoing  Ongoing	VisitScotland  NLC - Enterprise
1.4	We will support appropriate investment and growth in tourism development areas	Research the baseline number of tourism businesses operating within North Lanarkshire in each locality, so we have evidence of capacity in the sector to support new developments.	Research the baseline number of tourism businesses operating within North Lanarkshire.	New Programme	2023	NLC – Tourism Steering Group

<b>Theme: Business</b>						
<b>Aim: We will build business resilience, sustainability, and profitability</b>						
<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Brief Description of detailed actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead</b>	
1.5	We will support businesses to deliver high quality memorable experiences which benefit visitors and the places they visit.	Encourage business investment in the quality of the tourism product through the Visit Scotland Quality Assurance Scheme.  Provide online "Bel-anarkshire" training modules to assist new or existing employees within the tourism sector to improve customer service skills and be an ambassador for Lanarkshire.  Encourage businesses to actively participate in customer feedback schemes such as trip advisor, Trustpilot, google and also internal monitoring of customer experience.	10 new businesses to join quality assurance, continue subsidy once costs resume  Provide online "Bel-anarkshire" training modules	N/A  N/A	VisitScotland  NLC – Enterprise	
1.6	Encourage businesses to procure locally and encourage local spend	Encourage tourism businesses to register for the Scotland Loves Local Gift Card Scheme.	N/A	2023	NLC - Enterprise	
1.7	We will establish measures to help tourism businesses modernise practices to become more sustainable.	Investigate the potential to enhance current attractions with improved internet speed and digital capability including augmented reality and offsite virtual reality experiences.  Promote the Scottish Enterprise Travel Tech for Scotland initiative which encourages and supports Scottish tech companies to innovate and diversify, developing new products, services and processes of benefit to tourism companies and connects tourism businesses with Scotland's tech expertise in order to address business challenges. <a href="https://efi.ed.ac.uk/traveltech-scotland/">https://efi.ed.ac.uk/traveltech-scotland/</a>	N/A  N/A	2023	NLC – Tourism Steering Group	
			N/A	Ongoing	Scottish Enterprise	

2. People and Skills

**Theme: People and Skills**

**Aim: We will attract, develop, and retain a skilled, committed, diverse and valued workforce.**

	<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Brief Description of detailed actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead</b>
2.1	We will support the sector to recruit staff	Support tourism businesses to take on new staff through the North Lanarkshire's Working Prospects programme. Support tourism businesses to take on employees through the Supported Enterprise Service.	Promote the North Lanarkshire's working programme Promote the Supported Enterprise Service	N/A N/A	Ongoing Ongoing	NLC - Employability NLC – Employability/ Supported Enterprise Service
2.2	We will promote tourism as a career of choice in partnership with the education sector	Provide information awareness sessions within primary and secondary education establishments and awareness raising about tourism career paths. Link with tourism businesses to identify placement opportunities for young people so that they can experience work within the sector and understand the types of careers available. Support young people looking to progress the establishment of a tourism business through access to the full suite of Business Gateway's Business start-up support, including a referral to The Prince's Trust business enterprise programme. Identify skills shortfalls and link with education partners to identify suitable pathways to employment. Deliver vocational education in schools linked to the hospitality sector including delivery of level 4 foundation apprenticeships in Hospitality. Promote the adoption of the Scottish Government's fair work practices initiative within the tourism sector.	Deliver pilot awareness sessions 7 chef academy placements to be identified N/A N/A N/A N/A	New Programme N/A N/A N/A N/A	2023 2023 Ongoing 2023 Ongoing	NLC Enterprise and Education NLC – Tourism Steering Group Business Gateway Lanarkshire NLC – Workforce for the Future NLC - Education NLC – Tourism Steering Group

3. Place

**Theme: Place**

**Aim: We will create and develop an attractive, competitive, and sustainable destination that offers authentic and memorable experiences.**

<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Brief Description of detailed actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead</b>
3.1 Further develop potential of council owned venues to provide first class facilities and enhanced customer experiences.	Planning is underway to use Strathclyde Country Park as the location for a food and activity event with a focus on cycling in 2022.	Deliver the event	N/A	2022	NLC – Corporate Communications
	Strathclyde Country Park is developing the first phase of its Velo Park ambition which will see significant investment in cycling facilities, driving additional visits to the park and appealing to a wider audience.	Deliver investment in cycling facilities	N/A	Ongoing	NLC
3.2 We will support tourism assets to deliver high quality memorable experiences.	Investigate funding opportunities to restore, expand and enhance Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life.	N/A	N/A	Ongoing	NLC
	Work with VisitScotland business relationship manager to advise tourism businesses on ways to develop and diversify their product.	N/A	N/A	Ongoing	NLC / Support: VisitScotland
	Deliver workshops to promote the benefits of attending Visit Scotland Expo and ensure businesses are well prepared.	More businesses selling at travel trade events and to tourism intermediaries	N/A	Ongoing	NLC / Support: VisitScotland
	Create promotional resources that highlight North Lanarkshire tourism and leisure offering to increase footfall and create experiential linkages between assets.	Creation and promotion of herald walking and cycling guides	N/A	Ongoing	NLC / Support: VisitScotland
	Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI)	TBC	N/A	2023	NLC – Tourism Steering Group / Support: VisitScotland
	Take advantage of campaigns and other opportunities to align with the UCI Cycling Worlds 2023 in Glasgow to increase the visitor and community profile of North Lanarkshire's leisure cycling offer.	New updated website to be created	N/A	Ongoing	NLC / Support: VisitScotland
Work with VisitScotland to enhance visitlanarkshire.com. Utilise VisitScotland resources in order to improve site performance based on complete SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) audit by VisitScotland.	Update VisitScotland on North Lanarkshire products to ensure that North Lanarkshire products are included in relevant marketing material	N/A	Ongoing	NLC / Support: VisitScotland	

<b>Theme: Place</b>						
<b>Aim: We will create and develop an attractive, competitive, and sustainable destination that offers authentic and memorable experiences.</b>						
<b>Key Action</b>	<b>Brief Description of detailed actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead</b>	
3.3	We will carry out area marketing activity to encourage visitors to explore the area throughout the year.	Identify opportunities to partner with VisitScotland to deliver paid marketing activity where appropriate. This will include participation in VisitScotland's 'Themed Year' marketing campaigns. Deliver promotional campaigns and PR activities through VisitLanarkshire to raise the awareness of the Lanarkshire tourism offering. Formalise a marketing plan for VisitLanarkshire to promote NL as a place to visit. Ensure that the VisitLanarkshire.com website and associated channels remain relevant and enhance the customer journey. Engage with Community Boards to identify opportunities to promote their local area assets.	N/A	Ongoing	NLC / Support: VisitScotland	
3.4	We will support venues to be inclusive and accessible destinations enabling all visitors to travel widely and enjoy the full range of visitor experiences.	Spring and Autumn campaign activity N/A N/A N/A Commission and delivery of engagement events. N/A Increase number of businesses with an accessibility statement.	N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A	2023 Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	NLC NLC – Corporate Communications NLC – Tourism Steering Group NLC – Tourism Steering Group NLC – Tourism Steering Group NLC – Tourism Steering Group	

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Produced by

## **NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL**

Jennifer Thomson

Enterprise Development Officer (Tourism)

Enterprise and Communities

5th Floor, 2 Tryst Road, Fleming House

Cumbernauld G67 1JW

**NORTHLANARKSHIRE.GOV.UK**

