



Renfrewshire Visitor Plan 2018–2021





Vision

Renfrewshire is the destination for authentic experiences and unexplored gems.

A place of rich built, cultural, and natural heritage and great outdoors—a blend of historic towns, pretty villages and beautiful countryside. We are home to historic Paisley—Scotland's largest town, the place that made the iconic world-renowned Paisley Pattern... and built the second largest concentration of listed buildings in Scotland. A place of makers, radicals, secrets and fascinating stories as yet untold, and we can't wait to share it with you.

World-class culture and architecture, wilderness and wilds and great events that people come out for—ten minutes from our International Airport and our sister city Glasgow.

We will attract more visitors to experience a great day out in Renfrewshire. We will create the very best visitor offer and experience that exceeds expectations, and will support a network of local place ambassadors who will welcome EVERYONE.



Paisley and Renfrewshire context

We are at a pivotal moment for Paisley and Renfrewshire, a time of true partnership when we have the opportunity to transform place perceptions on a national and international stage and grow our economy.

There is also recognition that a thriving tourism industry built around culture and the arts and sport can generate important social benefits—increased civic pride, sense of belonging, wellness and self-belief, for local people and our visitors.

Paisley's bid for UK City of Culture 2021 has been an important accelerant to achieve our visitor and tourism targets and to our place transformation. Already

providing a unique opportunity to promote our place to national and international visitors on a scale not previously imagined. The impact of this is being felt throughout the region.

Significant investment is being made in Renfrewshire through a multi-million-pound infrastructure investment via Glasgow City Region City Deal, a new destination brand strategy and £113m of investment in Paisley Town Centre. Renfrewshire is working hard to enhance our visitor offer and ensure we feature on the 'must-see' locations list of domestic and international tourists. Our tourism sector has risen to the challenge; collaborating to provide an excellent and authentic experience for visitors—

exemplified by a 24% growth in visitor numbers to Renfrewshire in 2016 against the previous year, out-performing the rest of the wider Glasgow and Clyde Valley region, high visitor satisfaction rates for our events and the recent award of Purple Flag Status in Paisley.

Scotland's Heritage Tourism 2020 strategy estimates heritage tourism was worth £1.34 billion in 2013 and has set a target to grow that to £1.7—£1.95 billion by 2020. This includes Contemporary Culture, Historic Environment and Built Heritage, and Cultural Heritage.

For Renfrewshire this is great news. Paisley has long been a cultural pioneer and our cultural icons are powerful hooks for first-time visitors and an important part of the region's untold story.

We have other great assets—our people, a network of towns and villages that offer unique heritage and food and drink experiences as well as access to our countryside. We have first class connectivity—an international airport, Scotland's fourth busiest railway station which links to the mainline UK network and cruise terminals—and fantastic cultural and historic venues including the 12th century Paisley Abbey. Our visitor offer is compelling; villages and neighbourhoods providing new and niche experiences; rich cultural heritage drawing out a genuine reflection of Paisley and Scotland, and numerous outdoors and leisure activities.

Snapshot to 2021: The Plan

Target by 2020



An extra 590,000 day visits to Renfrewshire by 2020

As UK City of Culture 2021, Paisley 2021 will bring 850,000 visitors to the area in 2021 and a visitor spend of £43 million



Grow the value of spend from £72.5m to £103.6m (+£31m)

Current visitors



Day visitors: 93%



Overnight: 7%



Scotland: 90%



Rest of UK: 3 %



International: 7%

Our visitors profile

- Constantly connected
- Influenced by peer recommendation
- Engage on channels they use and trust
- Staying with family and friends a driving factor

Source:STR Research Visitor Survey (2017)

Target markets

Propensity to visit

Home turf one

2.6 million day visitors within a 60-minute drive time. 4.2m visitors within a two-hour drive time.

Six key audiences:

- cultural explorers
- family favourites
- good night out
- it's all outdoors
- history and heritage
- leisure seekers

Home turf two

- 2 million visitors to Glasgow including 660,000 international visitors per year through Glasgow Gateway partnership.

Growth markets

- Homecoming:
 - family and friends
 - diaspora
 - university alumni
- Near neighbours:
 - NE and NW England and Northern Ireland
- Scotland visitors:
 - Renfrewshire start/mid/end point of existing tourist trip

Strategic portfolios



Enablers



Digital first

harness opportunities by constantly evolving technology—widening access and reinterpreting the visitor product



Data and insight

- using data and insight driven process to profile Renfrewshire visitors and audiences
- develop new and exciting content
- audience and campaign development
- monitor trends and behaviours



Partnership

delivering visitor infrastructure through strong partnership with national agencies, our neighbours, the private sector and communities



Expertise

- dedicated destination marketing and management team
- destination marketing network
- specialist support

Priority actions (taken from sector consultation)

- Establish tourism business network
- Improve attractiveness of entry points
- Product development and improve visitor experience
- Extend visitor season
- Develop and understand target audience insights
- Improve facilities and itineraries for travel trade

Monitoring action plan progress



- Annual report Leadership Board, Renfrewshire Council
- Quarterly report Strategic Tourism Leadership Group (tourism sub-group, Renfrewshire Economic Leadership Board)

Objectives and targets

Increase destination marketing to grow OTSH (opportunities to see or hear) something positive about Renfrewshire

Impact measure	Baseline	2020 target
Unique visits to the new destination website	Launch of new website January 2018	250,000 unique visits
Number of media familiarisation visits	5 per year	20 per year
Positive coverage reach (OTSH) – national, international and social media	15 million per year	120 million per year
Partnership with VisitScotland	Partnership confirmed	Permanent profile for Renfrewshire—digital and campaign
Partnership with Glasgow Life	Partnership confirmed	Permanent profile for Renfrewshire—digital and campaign

Increase visitor numbers by 4% year on year

Impact measure	Baseline	2020 target
Visits to Renfrewshire Attractions	1.7m: Scottish Visitor Attraction Monitor, Moffat Centre (2016)	1.99m
Visitors to events (outwith Renfrewshire)	155,000 unique attendees (54,000 visitors): Culture Republic	100,000 visitors
Day visits to Renfrewshire	2.73m: VisitScotland/ Great Britain Day Visits Survey (GBDVS, 2015)	3.32m
Holiday nights in Renfrewshire	45,000: VisitScotland/ Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS, 2015)	55,000
Partnership with Glasgow to promote Paisley product	2 million visitors to Glasgow gateway	3 million visitors to Glasgow and wider region by 2023

Increase visitor spend in Renfrewshire by £31m

Impact measure	Baseline	2020 target
Day visits to Renfrewshire	£60.51m: VisitScotland/ Great Britain Day Visits Survey (GBDVS, 2015)	£89m
Overnight holiday trips to Renfrewshire	£12m: VisitScotland / Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS, 2015)	£14.6m

Enhance the visitor experience in Renfrewshire by building capacity and developing a quality product

Impact measure	Baseline	2020 target
Customer-facing staff and volunteers undertaking customer service excellence training	New customer service excellence scheme launched in February 2018	1,000 customer facing staff
Increase our 'overall impression' visitor rating	6.2/10 (STR, 2017)	8.0/10
Number of new itineraries and trails	1 new trail developed (Discover Paisley, 2017)	8

Support tourism business growth and collaboration

Impact measure	Baseline	2020 target
Number of businesses actively engaged in a business network	No existing network	80 businesses engaged
Employment in tourism related industries	5,600: Scottish Annual Business Survey (SABS), Scottish Government	7,150
Tourism related industry turnover	£200m: Scottish Annual Business Survey (SABS), Scottish Government	£210m



Theme one: Place profile and improving the customer journey

- Visits to Renfrewshire attractions grew by 24.6% in 2016 to 1.7m visits in 2016 —outperforming the rest of the City Region.
- Opportunities to see or hear something positive about Paisley and Renfrewshire in the media have grown from 15 million in 2015 to 277 million opportunities in 2016 and 2017 (a media value of £7.1m) – driven by Paisley's bid for UK City of Culture. Media familiarisation visits from consumer and travel media have resulted in national and international destination coverage, positioning the region as a place of cultural and historic significance and a great short-break destination.
- Social media reach for Paisley and Renfrewshire—through Paisley 2021 channels has grown from a zero base in 2015 to 16.1 million (October 2017). Paisley2021.co.uk has generated 512,000 page views from 182,000 users —17,000 from 159 non-UK countries.
- A new destination brand has been developed in consultation with local people and place leaders across Renfrewshire's public, private and academic sectors. A new destination website will launch in January 2018 and drive destination marketing activity.



Theme two: Leadership and collaboration

- A Strategic Tourism Leadership Group has been established to develop the Visitor Plan to 2021, monitor delivery of the current Framework, and steer the sector's delivery of our tourism vision.
- Renfrewshire is an active member of Glasgow City Region Tourism Partnership (part of the Glasgow City Region City Deal), and has contributed to a regional destination marketing strategy with a shared objective to deliver an additional one million overnight visitors to the region by 2023, drawing on shared visitor assets.
- New partnerships have been developed with VisitScotland and Glasgow Life to foreground Renfrewshire's visitor offer through owned channels and new campaigns.



Theme three: Building our capabilities

- We understand our visitors better and have established baseline visitor information and tourist insights – including visitor profiles and experience at events, and the economic, social and cultural impact of events and festivals.
- New target audiences have been identified and profiled to support product development and visitor campaigns.
- Funding has been secured to develop a 'customer service excellence' training programme modelled on the highly successful Glasgow Welcomes and a programme of product innovation workshops.



Theme four: Providing authentic experiences

- New wayfinding has been introduced in Paisley Town Centre and new discover guides for Paisley and Renfrewshire are available at attractions and through Renfrewshire hotel welcome packs.
- In the past five years 1.1 million individuals have attended festivals and events in Renfrewshire. Unique attendees to town centre events grew by 25% in 2016 and 23% in 2017. 35% of the 160,000 attendees this year were visitors to Renfrewshire and reported an overall satisfaction level of 93%. Paisley's annual Halloween Festival has listed in the top 20 UK festivals in 2016 and 2017. The 2017 events programme contributed £1.3 million spend into the local economy.
- Since 2014, Renfrewshire Council has bid for and won:
 - The European Curling Championships in 2016 generating an economic impact of £750,000 for Renfrewshire
 - The British Pipe Band Championships 2016-18 and a second bid to secure the event until 2021 (15,000 visitors per year)
 - The Scottish Album of the Year Awards in 2016, 2017 and 2018, and the MG Alba Scottish TRAD Awards in December 2017, generating UK and international media profile through live broadcast
 - The Royal National Mòd in 2021 or 2022 (Mòd 2013 was the second most successful on record bringing 8,000 visitors to Renfrewshire)

Priorities 2018–2021

An analysis of Renfrewshire's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats was carried out as part of sector consultation during the development of the Plan (see figure 1 on page 18), and informed our future focus.

We will promote all of Renfrewshire and shine a spotlight on the region's vibrant mix of villages, outdoors and neighbourhoods. This will be underpinned by developing a compelling product and a first-class visitor experience.



Defining our unique culture and heritage

A vibrant culture is key to differentiating Renfrewshire's product and creating a unique experience. It helps to shape perceptions, builds reputation and status, and provides day visitors and domestic and international leisure tourists with a reason to visit.

Cultural tourism includes our arts and entertainment offer—both free and paid. It includes: museums; theatre; music; dance; comedy; exhibitions; fashion; festivals; literature; film; history, heritage and Paisley's architecture and built environment. It also describes visitors actively taking part in culture and combining this with tourism (food and drink, hotels, shops... and the people they meet) in a way that's authentic and means something to them.

Our new plan, will for the first time, focus on assets that have a distinct appeal to target customers. The focus of our activity will include: heritage, architecture, radicals, food and drink, music, poetry and song, natural wilds and the unique Paisley Pattern.



Growing events and festivals

Event and festivals drive visitors and provide the best-possible introduction to our place, key to generating repeat visits. We will continue to showcase Renfrewshire on a national stage and create more opportunities for visitor to experience our unique cultural heritage by bidding for and winning new cultural and sporting events that deliver economic impact. This will generate an additional 100,000 unique visitors to Renfrewshire by 2021 and £2 million in local spend.

We will host the Scottish Album of the Year Awards in 2018, the British Pipe Band Championships to 2021, new festival Paisley Calling to 2021 and the Royal National Mòd in 2021/22. We are bidding for a number of new cultural and sporting events from 2018.

We will further develop our annual programme of cultural events, including the annual Paisley Food and Drink Festival, Sma' Shot/Weave Festival, The Spree

and the Halloween Festival, to positively impact on the profile and reputation of Renfrewshire and share our untold story, and add new signature events to the programme.

We will continue to align to Themed Years through innovative collaborations:

- 2018 Scotland's Year of Young People
- 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage and European Route of Industrial Heritage
- 2020 Scotland's Coast and Waters – includes distilling and inland waterways
- 2022 Year of Scotland's Stories

Through the Culture, Heritage and Events Fund*, we will continue to support the development of new local events and festivals across Renfrewshire to celebrate local culture across the region's towns, villages and neighbourhoods, and add to programme where appropriate.

* Culture Heritage and Events Fund was set up to support Paisley's bid for UK City of Culture 2021 to help raise ambition and build capacity in the local creative scene.



Building customer experience

Growing our profile and reputation as a quality destination will require a high standard of service excellence, that in turn increases visitor spend and encourages visitors to share their experience leading to positive word-of-mouth—currently a powerful motivator for our target audiences and visitors to Renfrewshire events.

We will continually improve the consistency, availability and quality of service that visitors experience in Renfrewshire.

With our transport partners we will work to improve routes into the region and build an integrated and sustainable transport network across the region, while improving our physical access points, arrival and way-finding information. We will extend our free shuttle bus service to major event days.

Through the new destination brand and visitor website, and with our marketing network, we will improve how we present information about our place to customers, and ensure we communicate a compelling, consistent offer—digital and offline, to help visitors have the confidence to choose Renfrewshire to explore, extend their experience into the evening, and extend the overall length of their stay with us.



Enablers

Through collaboration with the Glasgow City Region tourism group and local partners, we will continue to share data and insights that allow us to respond to customer needs and trends, identify new opportunities, build loyalty and improve the customer journey.

We will work with partners, including VisitScotland, Glasgow and the regional destination partnership to ensure Renfrewshire's visitor offer is included in national campaigns that encourage existing visitors to extend their stay, venture off the beaten track and see and do more.



To support visitor growth, growth in quality accommodation is required and up to 200 new hotel bedrooms (two new hotels and four hotel extensions in planning) will be delivered by 2021 on top of an existing 1,779 rooms. We will support the sharing economy and the growth of short-term accommodation provision that appeals to visitor seeking a 'live like a local' experience. We will continue to work with the University of West of Scotland (UWS) to secure campus accommodation out with term time, and Glasgow Life's online accommodation booking service, to secure hotel bedrooms during large scale events.

We are committed to building our profile as an accessible destination and will work with Renfrewshire Access Panel and other partners to continually improve our accessible visitor offer.

Figure 1—SWOT analysis

Strengths

- Diverse offering
- Rural locations and areas of natural beauty
- Network of villages offering cycling and food and drink experiences
- Built heritage, from listed buildings in Paisley to early medieval carved stones at Inchinnan
- Strong events programme
- Strong connectivity; access to road, rail, air, cruise, ferry
- History and heritage
- Successful visitor destination products e.g Soar, Mar Hall, Ingliston
- Passionate volunteer-led attractions
- Partnership working with Renfrewshire Volunteer Manager Forum
- Established groups e.g. CRN Heritage Tourism Group
- FE / HE institutions— expertise and central locations

Opportunities

- Trail and itinerary creation, such as textiles, food & drink etc
- Heritage and culture are significant motivators for visitor market
- New target markets identified
- Opportunities include outdoor pursuits, watersports, road cycling, food, golf, spa, accessible tourism
- Digital technologies provide new opportunities to create world-class visitor experiences and remove accessibility barriers
- Significant population in catchment area/close travel time
- Glasgow City Region Marketing and Tourism group
- Glasgow City Visitor Plan 2023, gateway approach to Renfrewshire
- Increased awareness understanding /acceptance of post-industrial regeneration through high profile projects e.g. Dundee V&A, The Kelpies, Glasgow CG2014
- UK City of Culture 2021
 - Increased positive profile
 - Momentum for business engagement
 - Up to one million additional visitors
- VisitScotland Growth Fund for marketing (requires private sector support)
- Scottish Enterprise support for customer service training
- Café culture
- Travel trade and study visits
- Markets—outdoor and Indoor
- Underused rivers e.g. White Cart, Black Cart, Clyde
- Event development e.g. music events utilising music schools throughout Renfrewshire, more use of Paisley Abbey etc
- Opportunity to create satellite events around larger ones e.g. the Mòd
- Use of out-of-town venues e.g. Ingliston

Weaknesses

- Underdeveloped tourism offer
- Limited evening/night-time economy
- Reliance on volunteers /(in)ability to recruit staff
- Inconsistent experience
- Limited opening hours for attractions
- No single portal (physical or digital) for tourist info
- No tourism business network, formal or otherwise
- Poor signage & wayfinding in Paisley— one way traffic and pedestrians
- Inconsistent connectivity despite strong transport links
- Archaeological potential is under researched / investigated

Threats

- Negative perceptions of Paisley
- Underdeveloped experiences, both urban and rural
- Very competitive market from other regions and destinations
- Limited sector collaboration across the region
- Attraction reliance on volunteers and seasonal opening
- Current lack of visitor information source/portal—although information provision is only one step in the customer journey
- Built heritage at risk e.g. Half Time school/former TA building
- Too many groups working independently for same outcomes

Delivery—how the plan will be delivered

We have identified seven strategic portfolios that will deliver Renfrewshire's visitor plan. Within each, capacity-building projects and actions have been identified that will be lead and delivered by the Council and its partners at a regional and national level.

Leadership and skills

We will build our capacity as a region for tourism growth, developing skills, delivering customer service training and creating new partnerships, this will include:

- Roll out of Paisley Welcomes from February 2018: customer-service excellence training programme for the tourism sector in Renfrewshire, to build service quality and product knowledge
- Support for all Renfrewshire attractions and accommodation providers to develop an online presence linked to visitscotland.org and the new destination website
- Providing stronger signposting to Digital Boost and digital skills support for individual businesses through Invest in Renfrewshire
- Developing national and international partnerships to bring original Paisley Pattern into production and work with local artists and makers to develop 'Paisley Original' merchandising
- Implementing the Renfrewshire volunteering strategy via Engage Renfrewshire and Invest Renfrewshire to build our hospitality and events skills pipeline
- Developing partnerships and best practice accessibility across all Renfrewshire attractions and events

Product development

We will create world-class visitor experiences and remove accessibility barriers. This will include:

- Widening access and reinterpreting Renfrewshire's historic and heritage attractions through digital technology
- Developing new packages and itineraries for individual explorers and travel trade that represent all of Renfrewshire's visitor offer and link local attractions
 - Spa and relaxation
 - Lovely Renfrewshire villages
 - Monks, radicals and reformers
 - Food and drink
 - Threads that bind us: textile heritage
 - Steeple and spires: ecclesiastical
 - Cycling and walking
 - Paisley Pattern
- Positioning Renfrewshire as best practice for accessible tourism by building on the offer at The Experience and Castle Semple
- Launching and marketing the 'Secret Collection' (new museum resource centre) and promoting touring collections in the lead up to the re-opening of Paisley Museum 2022
- Supporting the Renfrewshire Cultural Strategy

Destination development

We will support business development and build sense of place, this will include:

- Establishing a tourism business network to creating a forum for the sector to network and collaborate on product development, marketing and capacity building
- Roll-out of workshops and seminars, delivered by VisitScotland, Chamber of Commerce, Scottish Enterprise and the private sector on product innovation, digital, partnerships, marketing and data and insights
- Delivering three learning journeys per year to enable the local sector to experience best practice in other developing visitor destinations
- Engaging the private sector in the early development of bids for major events and their promotion, to ensure local business and retail can benefit fully
- Working with UWS and West College Scotland (WCS) to extend and develop student dwell time and position Paisley as a university town
- Improving arrival and gateway signage for visitors to Renfrewshire and local maps and way-finding
- Contributing to the integrated transport strategy
- Supporting sustainable management of volunteer-led attractions

Destination marketing

We will capitalise on the momentum generated by Paisley's bid for UK City of Culture 2021 and market Renfrewshire nationally and internationally, this will include:

- Implementing the destination brand marketing strategy, visitor marketing campaigns and new destination website from January 2018
- Expanding the Renfrewshire Marketing Network and develop an integrated approach to destination marketing
- Supporting all Renfrewshire tourism businesses to have an online presence
- Attending annual VisitScotland Expo and WorldTravel Market
- Hosting media familiarisation visits from national and international media
- Maximising partnerships with VisitScotland and Glasgow
- Developing new partnerships with travel trade, Airbnb, TripAdvisor, Scotrail and Virgin
- Collaborating on a new destination marketing strategy for the City Region, with a target of increasing visitors to the region by 1 million by 2023

Events and festivals

We will drive the growth in visitor numbers to our events programme through implementation of the Renfrewshire events strategy, this will include:

- Re-profiling the events programme and establishing new bidding criteria to grow and secure cultural and sporting events that generate economic and social impact and raise the profile of Renfrewshire
- Securing national funding for events from EventScotland and British Council
- Working with national and international organisations, partners and artists to increase participation locally and nationally
- Working with local and national promoters to secure 'must-see' artists and national tours
- Ensuring maximum visibility of Renfrewshire's events and festivals through National Agencies and Tourist Boards
- Establishing a Renfrewshire events forum—linked to the Regional Events and Festivals Board—to bring together public and private sector partners who support and contribute to major events and bidding strategy

Business tourism/ MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and events)

We will identify opportunities that match the scale of Renfrewshire venues, this will include:

- Assessing the existing business tourism market within the region and support venues to be corporate event ready through Renfrewshire Leisure, University of West of Scotland and West College Scotland
- Identifying and exploring routes for development and support, including partnerships with Glasgow Convention Bureau and the wider City Region

Data and insights

We will improve our baseline data and profiling of visitors to Renfrewshire and share insights with the sector to improve customer journey, product and campaigns, this will include:

- An annual visitor survey
- Improving accuracy of data collection and reporting through Renfrewshire attractions and gateway points
- Working alongside initiatives such as town centre wi-fi to collect additional data to enhance audience profiles
- Working in partnership with Glasgow City Region and operators such as Scotrail to collate more rounded data and measurements
- Aligning product development and marketing to motivation to visit (VisitScotland)
 - First time visitors to Scotland—scenery & landscape (58%) and history & culture (47%)
 - Repeat visits—scenery & landscape (47%) and history & culture (29%)

Source: Scotland Visitor Survey 2015 and 2016, VisitScotland and Jump Research

How we will monitor progress and keep on track

The development of Renfrewshire's Visitor Plan to 2021 has drawn on expertise from the tourism industry in the private and public sector at all stages of its development. The Strategic Tourism Leadership Group has been central to this and will monitor progress of the plan.

The group has four formal meetings each year and will champion the needs of the sector at local and national level and will support and steer the sector to deliver the plan, meet emerging challenges and opportunities and understand new trends.

The Strategic Tourism Leadership Group will form the new tourism sub-group of the Renfrewshire Economic Leadership Panel, and will drive partnership and collaboration, reviewing progress and recommending actions that will help Renfrewshire achieve its vision.

The delivery of the plan will be supported through the seven strategic portfolios. Each will develop a detailed work-plan and be supported by a project lead and project team – that will include representatives from the private, public and third-sector, across the tourism sector.

The new destination website will be developed to include an industry-only section that will provide the portfolio teams with access to resource; data and insights, industry information and contacts, and communication tools, to deliver their contribution.

