



Future Direction Document
Draft 6.0
August 2021

1.0 Purpose of the Document

The purpose of this document is to set out a proposed three-year plan for the future development of Visit Kelso.

This overarching plan will be delivered by an annual action plan. Each annual action plan will be written following a review of the previous year's actions.

For the purpose of this document, we will use Kelso to mean Kelso and district and VK to mean Visit Kelso.

2.0 Introduction

Visit Kelso is a community group, formed in May 2015, by business owners and community representatives within Kelso and the surrounding area. The main objective of the group is to market and promote the area to visitors and locals, resulting in sustainable economic development. The group consists of volunteers from varying backgrounds and areas of expertise who want to ensure the longevity of Kelso as a highly attractive destination for both locals and visitors. The diversity of the group provides the ideal insight into the business pressures and other aspects of the town. The group members volunteer their own time and resources, working together to develop Visit Kelso.

VK was successful following an application for Leader funding in 2016, which allowed the group to employ a Marketing Officer. This funding ended in 2018, but VK has managed to continue to pay for the services of two part-time Marketing Officers. However, this resource is not sustainable unless the group can generate additional income above that raised by membership fees alone.

Currently, the VK product is a range of digital communication platforms that are used to showcase members' businesses, promote activities/events and act as a conduit between town and people. The group has achieved great success with their activities to date and are now considering their future direction to build on this success.

3.0 The Visit Kelso Purpose

The purpose of Visit Kelso is to promote the story of Kelso to as diverse range of people as possible, positioning it as a place that is worthy of spending both time and money.

The story includes:

- Our past, with its culturally rich history and heritage
- Our present, we represent the people of the busy and welcoming town
- Our future, which is inspirational and progressive – a place you will want to be, either as a resident or a visitor

4.0 The Visit Kelso Mission Statement

To promote Kelso to our identified target markets as a destination that is:

- A place to live
- A place to be active
- A place to shop, eat & stay
- A place to learn about history and heritage
- A place to be for events
- A place to act as a 'home base' for travel beyond
- A place to invest

5.0 Target Markets

VK has two broad target markets

1. Visitor Target Market: Local residents and visitors who spend time and money in the town
2. Member Target Market: Businesses and organisations who can become members of the group

5.1 Visitor Target Market

Visitors to Kelso are essential for the sustainability of its economic development. Visitors can be further broken down depending on how far they travel to the town.

1. Regional residents – people who live within the Scottish Borders (including Kelso)
2. Day Visitors – people who live within a 2-hour drive time of Kelso
3. Overnighers - people who live between a >2-hour but < 4-hour drive time
4. International Travelers (for clarity, VK will not become involved in marketing to international travelers directly. Working the Visit Scotland and the South of Scotland Destination Alliance, the group will promote Kelso to international travelers who are already in Scotland)

VK will use the Visit Scotland market segmentation framework to understand the motivation of visitors in travelling to Kelso including:

- Adventure Seeking
- Curious Travelling
- Engaged Sightseeing
- Food-loving

VK will use the Visit Scotland research that identified key reasons for international travelers visiting Scotland.

- Working in line with National Campaigns as much as possible.

5.2 Member Target Market

Maintaining current membership levels is the key to the success of VK. The VK priorities are:

- To maintain current membership levels and keep the members engaged and involved.
- To identify and approach a variety of prospective members is required.

6.0 Geographical Catchment

The geographical catchment of VK and VK events promotion is:

- Kelso and district as per defined by Scottish Borders Council

7.0 Objectives

Objective
1.0 Improve Performance for Members
1.1 Increase footfall to Kelso 1.2 Increase awareness of Kelso 1.3 Increase duration of stay and/or repeat visit rate 1.4 Increase spend within member businesses
2.0 Financially Sustainable
2.1 Maintain membership of Visit Kelso 2.2 Increase non-membership income • Awards prize • Funding • Fundraising • Advertising
3.0 Increase awareness of Visit Kelso
3.1 Increase visits to the Visit Kelso website 3.2 Increase engagement on social media 3.3 Increase partnership working 3.4 Successful award wins

8.0 Our Action Plan 2021 -2022 – to be updated & reviewed post AGM 2022 (with additional plan for future years to follow)

Action	Responsibility	Date	Funding
Develop an annual income and expenditure budget with targets for income lines	KH/AC		
Review membership rates (inc. hanging basket costs and watering)	KH, CM and MC		
Roles and responsibilities	All		
Review secondary income options and progress with at least one option	JG, AC and JS		
Develop a Membership Management Procedure	KH, MC, EM (SB)		
Annual Communications Plan to include: - Plan and deliver seasonal (social media) campaigns - Writing and sending quarterly newsletters - Host 'Meet Visit Kelso' engagement sessions with prospective members (COVID-19 situation dependent) - Physical marketing collateral present in the town - Leaflet distribution - Attending networking events - Adding events to website - Website trails development	WR/KH/JA KH/EM All TBC TBC TN/AC/MC ALL (SSDA) WR AC/SF/JS/CM/DW		
Produce (membership) promotional material	KH/MC/WR		
Develop and maintain website – members and events	MM/MAC/WR		
Newsletters / other communications – Agree Timelines	KH/EM		
Project sub-groups (specifically, but not exclusively, for funded projects) - Town signage - Scotland's Town Partnership campaign - Website trails - Website photography (seasonal and categories)	DW/EM TN/MA/CM/WR/EM DW/AC/SF/JS/CM WR/JS/MC		

• Group's IT systems security • Future funding sources	AC/EM JS/AC/JG		
Develop a Marketing plan to support the work of VK & all the VK events and promotions: • Overall PR & Marketing plan- Long & Short term • Social Media Plans – monthly and annual • Both On & Offline PR & Marketing plans • Individual marketing & PR plans per Event/ Campaign	EM/WR Others as required		

9.0 Summary

As a voluntary group, VK undertakes a significant amount of work to benefit the town and the surrounding area. The objectives and actions listed will ensure the work remains relevant and impactful for the members and the town.