

Business Events Development Group

The Business Events Development Group is a representation of the Business Events industry within the region, chaired by Mike Metcalfe, General Manager at DoubleTree by Hilton Dundee. Group members include the bureau, VisitScotland Business Events, Scottish Enterprise, Business Tourism for Scotland, members representing the industry, accessibility and Pathfinders to help drive the ambition forward.

It is important to highlight that this is only the beginning of an exciting and ambitious journey that will benefit the wider economy with a focus on supporting the drive and ambition for business events by working collaboratively for the benefit of all.

A business events strategy is being developed and is a work in progress and will be finalised with input from the Business Events Development Group and our members.

It will be the responsibility of the Business Events Development Group to shape and drive this ambition led by the city convention bureau.

Be the voice for business events in the region

- Back the need for Dundee moving forward with investment in a conference centre, engaging with city region leaders and potential investors as identified within the [Scottish Enterprise Tayside Conference Centre Feasibility Study](#).
- Communicate the benefits of having a conference centre for the wider region such as the average capacity of future events being 35% larger than currently.
- Engage with city region leaders and Scottish Government to gain support and understanding as to the importance of business events as a significant driver in social and economic growth.
- Identify opportunities for a collective approach to resource growth activity.
- Support the need to improve access routes to the city and wider region

Respond to demand and support growth activities and opportunities

- Address the need to invest in resourcing the existing Convention Bureau to facilitate the ambition to grow Business events as identified in the Scottish Enterprise Tayside Conference Centre Feasibility Study . With a key focus on strengthening and developing the bureaus Conference Ambassador Programme. Enabling the bureau to take a proactive role in attracting business events across Scotland and the regions innovative sectors and provide support to the conference ambassadors to draw more professional and academic associations to consider hosting their next conference, congress or meeting in the region.
- Build an ambitious and robust destination offer to attract conferences circa 800 delegates as part of a short-term approach. Being creative as a destination in hosting and delivering business events (exploring the use of temporary structures such as Evolution Domes to increase capacity) further demonstrating the need for a conference centre and driving ambition and growth.
- Increased investment and identifying creative solutions that allow us to develop our Business events Destination Bid Fund in order to compete with national and international host destinations.
- Further develop the bureau's Conference Ambassador Programme, now rebooted as Pathfinders, as identified in the Scottish Enterprise Tayside Conference Centre Feasibility Study and drive home the enormous impact of business events to the individual ambassador, the research/ knowledge sector, the host institutes involved and the destination. Develop a strong proposition to support our conference ambassadors in achieving and amplifying their outcomes and legacies and give them the confidence to bid for and host a successful event – team approach. Demonstrating Dundee's proven track record of exceeding delegate numbers and overall success of conferences hosted.
- Encourage a new approach to collective bidding to confidently address and demonstrate viability and resource required to host a national or international conference in Dundee and the wider region involving our knowledge centres, University of Dundee, University of St Andrews, Abertay University and the James Hutton Institute.
- Be an acolyte, supporting calls for further development of new hotels within the region to provide additional bed stock.

Develop the destinations skill base to support business events to ensure we align with the demands from the industry.

- Engage with colleges and institutes to skill up the business events Industry to ensure we are adept and ready to respond to and meet the demands of the Business events Industry. In initial discussions, Dundee and Angus College indicated they are keen to explore the development of a focussed unit specifically for business events within their curriculum, as this is widely identified as a gap within the industry, with input from our industry partners (hotels, conference venues etc.). This would echo best practice in collaborative working in a similar way that Edinburgh Napier University is working with the EICC to deliver an MSc Business Event Management Postgraduate Degree. The course which became the first of its type in the UK when it was launched in 2017 in partnership with Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC), is the first in the country to become a member of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA). Students on this course undertake practical work experience in the form of placements at the EICC to cement the theoretical with the operational.
- Develop leadership development programmes, internships and placements locally to encourage young people to seek career paths in business events. Providing young people with the opportunity to gain valuable first-hand experience, develop our skill base and create employment opportunities. Creating a path to employment and developing our skills base is important to the destinations ability to respond to the demands of the Business events Industry. An example of such an initiative is currently being run by Fairmont St Andrews.
- Explore the opportunity to develop a Student Volunteer Programme, many host institutes are reliant on their student network to support and be hands on at the event. By providing support to the host institute in providing training to students about volunteer roles during the actual conference, allow students an invaluable opportunity to get close to a global community, hear from leading experts and augment their learning and development.
- Build on the success of Dundee & Angus Convention Bureau's business events focused Learning Journeys. The Learning Journeys provide a unique platform to impart knowledge and insight on challenges facing the business events industry, supports learning and collaboration, and encourages new investment and change in business practice that will have a positive impact on businesses and all visitors to the destination.

Pool resources to develop a strong marketing drive and message

- Develop a joint partnership approach to support a strong marketing drive by collectively funding and resourcing representation at key business events shows/platforms and engage with MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) media.

Group representation:

Chair - Mike Metcalfe

Dundee & Angus Convention Bureau – Karen Tocher

VisitScotland Business Events – Neil Brownlee

Business Tourism for Scotland – Judy Rae

Scottish Enterprise – Paul McCafferty/Aileen Lamb/Karen Craib

Hotel Venues – Kim Wilkinson, Apex City Quay Hotel & Spa

Accommodation – Manny Baber, Sleeperz Hotel

Unique Venues – Doreen Stout, Glamis Castle

Academic/Purpose Built Venues – Scott Robertson, University of Dundee

Access – Derrick Lang, Dundee Airport

Pathfinders Programme – Marianne MacKinnon, University of St Andrews