



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Minister for Tourism, Culture & Sport
Mike Watson MSP

Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Telephone: 0131-556 8400
scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk>

Dear Colleagues

I am writing to invite you to assist us to determine whether changes require to be made in the current Area Tourist Board arrangements, and if so, what these might be.

I want to ensure that the best possible support is provided to businesses at the local level. Area Tourist Boards are currently key players through their marketing activities and the information and booking services that they provide. However, there is no doubt that customer and business needs are changing. I want to ensure that ATBs are fully equipped to respond to those changes, and that they are able to work effectively with partners both at the local and at the national level.

I neither wish to constrain in any way the scope of the review nor to pre-empt what the outcome might be. I have therefore decided not to consult on the basis of specific options for change, but to leave it to respondents to suggest the support arrangements that they believe to be necessary. However, you may find it helpful if I mentioned some of the issues that have been raised with me over recent months, and about which you may wish to submit views.

These issues include:

- What is the future role of the Boards? What should their relationship be with VisitScotland?
- The present **structure** of the 14 Boards- is the correct structure, or is it of greater importance that the Boards work more closely together, particularly on marketing campaigns?
- The importance of the **cities** as gateways for tourism to Scotland- should there be special arrangements and if so, what should those be?
- The **role of local authorities** in Area Tourist Boards, and in particular, whether that role should include funding. Or should ATBs perhaps be funded from a single source, such as VisitScotland?
- The **relationship with Local Enterprise Companies**- should the marketing and business development function at the local level be combined within a single local organisation, or is the key to success greater partnership working?
- How best can the ATBs **engage** with businesses. Is the principle of membership still appropriate.
- The ways in which **information** is provided to visitors- should this be at a more local level, perhaps using local franchises or other existing local facilities, such as libraries?

These are just a few of the possible issues that you may wish to comment on. It is not comprehensive and I would be delighted to hear your thoughts on any other matter relating to the local support arrangements that you wish to raise with me.

I fully understand that this is a busy time of year for all connected with tourism, but I do hope that you will be able to contribute to the review. I am allowing a full 3 months for receipt of views. These should be sent to Lesley Fraser, Area 1A North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ. Alternatively, if you wish to reply by email, please do so to Tourism@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

I look forward to hearing from you.

MIKE WATSON

