

## Area Tourist Boards - re-organisation

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### The City of Edinburgh Council

18 March 2004

#### Purpose of report

- 1 This report advises the Council of the recent statement by the Tourism Minister, Frank McAveety MSP, on the re-organisation of the Area Tourist Board network.

#### Main report

- 2 For some time, an announcement has been expected on the future of the Area Tourist board network in Scotland (my report at item 8.9 on the agenda for this meeting makes reference to this).
- 3 On 11 March 2004, the Minister announced that Area Tourist Boards (ATBs) will be replaced by an integrated VisitScotland network, with 14 local tourism "hubs" corresponding to the existing ATB boundaries. A transitional period will see the present ATBs reduced in number to two, with effect from April 2005, and it is anticipated that the existing ATB staff will move to the new structure then. Primary legislation to formalise the VisitScotland network and abolish the ATBs will follow a further year of development work to refine the operation of the new network and rationalise some support functions.
- 4 The Scottish Executive is putting together a £20 million package aimed at increasing tourism revenue in Scotland by 50% over ten years to ensure that the tourism sector is in the best possible shape to grow in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition, increased marketing activity has been promised by the Minister, with a strong brand identity, consistently high quality in every aspect of tourism and integrated support for tourism.

- 5 Clearly, in the time since the Minister's announcement, there has not been an opportunity to consider in depth the implications for Edinburgh of the proposed changes but I have asked the Director of City Development to report on these to an early meeting of the Executive of the Council.

### Financial Implications

- 6 The financial implications for the Council will be assessed by the Director of Finance, in conjunction with the Edinburgh and Lothians Tourist Board, and reported to the Council in due course.

### Recommendations

- 7 The Council is asked to note the terms of the Minister's announcement, pending further reports on the changes to the tourism network in Scotland.



**Tom Aitchison**  
Chief Executive

15/03/04

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**Appendices**          None  
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**Wards affected**

**Background  
Papers**