

**CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Item No 3**

**30 APRIL 2024**

**DEPUTATION REQUESTS**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Deputation</b>
<b>3.1 In relation to Item 7.6 on the agenda – Edinburgh International Conference Centre - Convention Bureau Funding</b>	Edinburgh Tourism Action Group

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**Finance and Resources Committee, Tuesday, 30 April 2024**  
**Written Deputation Relating to Agenda Item 7.6:**  
**Edinburgh International Conference Centre – Convention Bureau Funding**  
**Submitted by Edinburgh Tourism Action Group**

**Leveraging Business Events for the Success of Edinburgh Tourism Strategy 2030**

**Introduction**

This submission has been prepared in support of the request for funding to provide a dedicated Convention Bureau function for Edinburgh.

ETAG believes that there is a very clear need, and strong business case, for ensuring that the current ‘guardianship model’ evolves into a more formalised, longer term structure with the resources required to ensure that Edinburgh can deliver the convention bureau services required in order for the city to effectively compete in the highly competitive, global MICE market, also referred to as Business Events, and deliver the ambitions of the Edinburgh 2030 Tourism Strategy.

**Edinburgh Tourism 2030 Strategy**

The Edinburgh Tourism Strategy 2030 is an ambitious strategy with an overarching aim “to reinforce Edinburgh’s position as a world-leading sustainable destination, promoting and preserving our celebrated cultural and historic city, supporting strong and sustainable economic growth whilst positively influencing the quality of life for the city’s residents and actively contributing to the success of the wider Scottish visitor economy.”

The strategy was developed under the auspices of the Edinburgh Tourism Strategy Implementation Group, a senior-level stakeholder group within the visitor economy, chaired by the leader of the City of Edinburgh Council. Extensive engagement and consultation with city partners, stakeholders, businesses and residents informed the strategy, which was endorsed by the City of Edinburgh Council in January 2020 prior to its publication. The strategy continues to be overseen by the Edinburgh Tourism Strategy Implementation Group.

Central to the Strategy is ensuring the Edinburgh visitor economy directly aligns with, and contributes to, the wider economic, social and environmental goals of the city. Business tourism has a crucial role to play in this, as it links directly to all five of the agreed strategic outcomes:

- **Thriving Visitor Economy**
  - Positive economic impact - Business events attract a high-spending demographic, who contribute significantly to the city's economy. These visitors typically spend more on accommodation, hospitality, transport, and leisure activities compared to leisure tourists, thereby generating substantial revenue for Edinburgh businesses, hotels, restaurants, retailers, visitor attractions.
  - Seasonal Balance - Business events help to mitigate seasonality as they typically attract visitors during off-peak periods. While leisure tourism tends to peak during the summer months, business events often take place year-round, distributing visitor numbers more evenly throughout the calendar and providing a steady stream of revenue for businesses in Edinburgh.
  - Shop window for a global audience - Business events provide a unique platform to showcase the city's strengths, expertise, and innovation to a global audience. Hosting international conferences and conventions allows the city to position itself as a hub for knowledge exchange, research collaboration, academic excellence and industry leadership.
  
- **Fair Work, More & Better Jobs**
  - Creates jobs - Growth of the business events sector stimulates direct and indirect employment opportunities.
  - Fosters skills development and facilitates career progression – Drives demand for skilled employees and encourages employees to develop within the sector.
  - Supports entrepreneurs – Stimulates growth in new businesses to support and service the sector.
  
- **Ongoing Investment in the City**
  - Drives city investment - Demand for business events drives investment in infrastructure and facilities, including connectivity, technology, conference and meeting venues, accommodation and leisure activities. Continued investment not only enhances Edinburgh's capacity to host large-scale global events but also improves the overall city experience, making the city more attractive to business visitors, leisure visitors and residents.
  
- **Contributing To Net Zero**
  - Support the journey to Net Zero – Demand for sustainable practices within business events is growing and offering responsible, low carbon choices to business visitors is vital. The business events sector is actively contributing to the visitor economy's and Edinburgh's goal to reduce carbon emissions.

- Catalyst for change – Business events provide a platform to showcase technology which supports our climate action goals and which educates and raises awareness of the climate change issues and challenges that we face.
- **Better Quality of Life**
  - Encourages cultural exchange - Business events attracting visitors from diverse corners of the globe foster enriched cultural experiences and promote diversity and inclusivity particularly when events engage with local communities and leave a positive legacy.
  - Supports educational and professional development – The extensive scope of subject matter that business events bring to the city provides opportunities for knowledge sharing, professional networking, and access to educational resources.
  - Creates a sense of pride – The ability to attract and host high profile business events enhances Edinburgh's reputation as a leading global destination for conferences, conventions, and exhibitions and reinforces the city's achievements.

### **Collaboration is at the Heart of Success**

The successful delivery of the Edinburgh Tourism Strategy 2030 relies on collaborative partnerships across the city. To facilitate this, the Edinburgh Visitor Economy Partnership (EVEP) has been established as a delivery model. EVEP is a collaborative network of organisations and individuals from the private sector, public sector and third sector pooling resources, skills, knowledge and experience.

To fully realise the opportunities offered by the business events sector to the visitor economy in Edinburgh and the wider city economy, a dedicated and coordinated 'Team Edinburgh' approach is essential. By harnessing the specialist skills, knowledge and experience necessary to position and support Edinburgh as a world-leading destination for business events we can effectively achieve our long-term strategic ambitions and create memorable experiences for our visitors.

The EICC in its guardianship role of the Edinburgh Convention Bureau is a first class example of a Team Edinburgh approach. Through its dedicated collaboration with city stakeholders and partners, coupled with its extensive experience and knowledge of the business events sector, the EICC has enabled Edinburgh to compete successfully in a highly competitive global market contributing to Edinburgh's international reputation.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, business events are integral to the successful delivery of the Edinburgh Tourism Strategy 2030, contributing to the five strategic outcomes that the strategy aims to achieve. By leveraging business events, Edinburgh can attract high-value visitors, boost sustainable economic growth, and position itself as a leading global destination. ETAG believes that evolving the current 'guardianship model' into a more formalised, longer-term structure would build on the successes already achieved and be in the best interests of the strategy, the Edinburgh visitor economy and the city as a whole.

26<sup>th</sup> April 2024