



Candidate Brief

Brief for the position of
Chief Executive, Visit**Aberdeenshire**
February 2017



VisitAberdeenshire

Visit**Aberdeenshire** is the officially recognised destination management organisation (DMO) and lead body for tourism serving Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Its primary purpose is to deliver the tourism strategy for the area and its remit embraces both destination marketing and destination development. Visit**Aberdeenshire**'s ultimate goal is to lift the economic impact of tourism on the region.

Visit**Aberdeenshire** is a 'not-for-profit' company limited by guarantee; transparent, accountable to its stakeholders and reinvesting any trading surplus in the destination tourism offer. There is a public/private Board of Directors and organisational structure with Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire Councils and Opportunity North East (ONE) being significant contributors. Visit Scotland and Scottish Enterprise are also fully committed to working with the company.

Visit**Aberdeenshire** is open and inclusive in their approach, inviting all those with an interest in tourism to be part of their activities and communications network. They engage with all parts of the industry and across the region. Where it is of clear value Visit**Aberdeenshire** will work productively with neighbouring destinations and other industry sectors.

The disciplines Visit**Aberdeenshire** covers include Industry Engagement and Development, Leisure Tourism, Business Tourism and Travel Trade, Festivals and Culture and in support have established a flexible, knowledgeable and professional team.

Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire have a fantastic tourism product: three cathedrals, 14 castles forming part of the longest castle trail in Europe, a host of museums, nine Scottish National Trust properties, many gardens and buildings of interest, unique preserved fishing villages, Old Aberdeen, Footdee, one of the 10 best coastlines in the world as rated by National Geographic, four working harbours, many coastal and harbour cruises, three beautiful rivers, fantastic wildlife, a world class Aquarium, 17 distilleries and the whisky trail, Royal Deeside and Balmoral, some 50 golf courses and a state of the art conference centre (AECC) and new Port Cruise facilities that will encourage the region to win a more significant share of the growing cruise market.

The Vision for 2020

- Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire is recognised as one of Northern Europe's leading destinations for leisure and business travel. It provides high-quality, distinctive and authentic experiences, attracting new and repeat visitors from its target markets.
- Tourism enterprises across the region are led by skilled and committed people, investing and innovating in response to market trends and contributing more and more to the area's economic success.
- The tourism sector and all stakeholders work co-operatively under the recognised and valued leadership of Visit**Aberdeenshire**, becoming more self-sufficient and less dependent on public sector funding for marketing and development.

The mission of Visit**Aberdeenshire** is to drive sustainable growth of the visitor economy of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire through strategic leadership of destination development and marketing. It will be responsible for the review, co-ordination and monitoring of the regional Tourism Strategy and for ensuring it contributes to the objectives of the National Strategy for Scotland. In summary Visit**Aberdeenshire** will:

- Bring resources and energies together to ensure effective action
- Champion development of the quality, accessibility and scope of the tourism offer
- Transform the image of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire as a national and international leisure and conference destination
- Lead and co-ordinate visitor destination marketing and provide opportunities for businesses to reach their target markets
- Help tourism businesses and their people maximise effectiveness, hone their skills, increase their innovation
- Be the focus for communications across and on behalf of the tourism sector in the destination.

For more information please visit www.visitabdn.com.

The Position

Visit**Aberdeenshire** now seeks to appoint a successor to its current Chief Executive, Steve Harris, who has indicated his intention to retire, effective from March 2017.

The Chief Executive enjoys a prominent position with a range of local, regional and national stakeholder bodies. The new Chief Executive must continue to develop excellent working relationships with multiple stakeholders (public, private and industry) and build towards delivering the Vision for 2020.

Reporting to the Board and based in Aberdeen, the Chief Executive will lead a small team to deliver four disciplines: Marketing; Business Development; Business Engagement and Product Development. The Chief Executive will provide leadership and strategic direction for the organisation in achieving its aims and objectives, working together with the Board and key stakeholders.

Visit**Aberdeenshire** require an outstanding individual as its Chief Executive to lead the organisation in its next stage of evolution and development. Working across a wide geographical area, this is a critically important appointment and will provide leadership to the organisation and its wider constituency, and be a key relationship holder within Scotland, the UK and beyond with a wide range of stakeholders.

Tourism is a key sector for the North East economy and supports 20,000 jobs in the region. The Chief Executive appointment will therefore be an influential role and the impact of the Chief Executive will be considerable. Any individual with a genuine and long-term passion for promoting the diversity of opportunities the region offers visitors will be attracted by the purpose inherent in the role.

The right candidate will look forward to the prospect of influencing the future prosperity of the region and to developing and delivering an exciting programme of activity.

The ability to have a tangible and far-reaching impact on the North East of Scotland will be irresistible to the right kind of candidate. This role will operate at the most senior levels across the region and beyond, working with multiple stakeholders, local and national governments, and across the entire value and supply chain in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

Visit**Aberdeenshire** works closely with private businesses, public agencies and local authorities to grow the visitor economy and to ensure that visitors experience the very best of Aberdeenshire and that the region makes the most of its outstanding assets and so realises its potential.

This includes:

- Marketing Aberdeen to its target markets to attract visitors for tourism.
- Providing information and inspiration to visitors and potential visitors so they get the best experience of a visit to Aberdeenshire.
- Working with industry partners to help the industry meet – and strive to exceed – visitors’ expectations.
- Working with all stakeholders and industry to develop the tourism product over time.

Key Areas of Responsibility

- To ensure that the organisation delivers its mission statement and fulfils its strategic objectives.
- To set appropriate targets and monitor performance against them; reporting on business performance to the Visit**Aberdeenshire** Board as required.
- To provide leadership and strategic direction for the organisation.
- To continually raise the profile of the organisation and be the principal spokesperson with a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties, government and regulatory bodies and the media.
- To lead a mutually supportive, high performing staff team in which individual roles are clearly defined and with a strong sense of collective responsibility for key decisions.
- To lead on the development and implementation of the Visit**Aberdeenshire** Business Plan.
- Through working in partnership with stakeholders develop, implement and monitor a brand and promotion strategy.
- To maintain and, where necessary, develop the organisations’ systems, processes and human resource management policies, to ensure that all staff are selected, trained, developed, rewarded and appraised in a way that is consistent with the organisational values and helps the organisation to achieve its goals.
- To ensure that the organisation is closely aligned with its partners and continues to grow and attract support while maintaining a sound governance structure.

- Ensure that the financial management and corporate governance of the organisation is robust and delivers efficient and effective use of funds within a strong and effective risk management framework.
- Deliver on sources of funding.

Key areas for decision making include strategic planning and implementation, financial management, line management, team working and representation.

The Candidate

This Chief Executive position requires an individual with senior management experience gained from the tourism, travel, leisure, hospitality or associated sectors. A successful track record in the sector will be essential to gain credibility and confidence with all stakeholders.

This position calls for a senior leader who understands fully the challenges of the complete range of issues in the sector. The successful candidate must possess the commitment, skills and experience to inspire and lead the organisation which has an exceptional opportunity to deliver impact at a regional level. The Chief Executive must demonstrate the ability to collaborate and build relationships with diverse, multiple stakeholders and manage productive relationships.

A true ambassador and figurehead, with good judgement of key issues and effective communication at all levels, candidates should have the capability to influence and facilitate the delivery of positive outcomes. The role is a mix of strategic and operational challenges requiring an individual with significant planning skills, outstanding organisational and multi-tasking abilities, and the drive and tenacity to generate measurable results.

Fundamental to success for this position will be first rate influencing, facilitating and diplomatic skills and the understanding and presence to represent VisitAberdeenshire in a variety of forums, including with the media, ensuring that the organisation and the tourism industry are well represented. The candidate will be comfortable operating in diverse, sensitive and political environments.

In addition to the high level strategic skills and experience required, the Chief Executive also will be managing a small organisation of about 15 people. The role requires a team player, with ability to shape a small team into a mutually supportive and high performing unit.

This role is high profile, and pan-industry. Key to success is an ability to demonstrate inspirational leadership, personal commitment and possess a true desire to deliver.

The ideal candidate will have a mix of:

- A proven track record of success in a significant leadership role in the tourism or travel sectors.
- A professional background in marketing, business development, stakeholder management or communications; or a leadership role in an organisation working in a relevant field.
- A proven ability to manage a complex range of stakeholders and interested parties.

- First class advocacy and communication skills with the ability to communicate with integrity and authority directly and through various forms of media including public speaking.
- An understanding of governance structures and experience of working in a Board environment.
- A strong track record of successfully developing and delivering strategic business plans, budgeting and performance management to achieve a vision.
- Commercial business acumen and an appropriate level of financial literacy and marketing expertise.
- An understanding of risk and how to manage it.
- A skilled leader and manager of people, demonstrating a commitment to organisation and staff development. An inspirational and consultative leadership style.
- Significant partnership building skills with the ability to establish and maintain credibility and strong collaborative relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, peer and related organisations to enhance the effectiveness of the organisation.
- An outward looking approach geared to enhancing the performance of the organisation through appropriate benchmarking and embracing new ideas and initiatives.
- A commitment to developing a high performing organisation. Passion, ambition and conviction to drive the organisation forward, increase its size, resources, impact, reach and influence to deliver an enhanced level of service and benefits for all of its stakeholders.
- A strategic mindset to see the big picture, prioritise the issues and translate them into action plans.
- Ability to analyse and interpret information and to make sound judgements and decisions.
- A commitment to diversity in the workplace.
- An interest and involvement in tourism.
- Candidates will preferably possess a degree (or the equivalent experience) and possibly a professional qualification or an MBA.

This is an exceptional opportunity for an individual to take on a challenging, multi-stakeholder leadership role which offers the chance to make a significant contribution to Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire's future prosperity.

The Remuneration

There is a competitive remuneration package on offer for the successful candidate.

This includes:

- Base salary
- Bonus potential
- Generous holiday entitlement
- Life Assurance
- Relocation assistance