


HISTORIC  SCOTLAND

TOURISM AND THE PALACE PROJECT



STIRLING
CASTLE

The recession has reinforced the importance of the tourism industry to the Scottish economy. And heritage tourism is of particular value in a country with such a rich and fascinating past. The Stirling Castle Palace Project will build on Scotland's strengths as a destination for overseas visitors and as somewhere with plenty to offer for the domestic market. Its completion will further add to the castle's must-see status and will also provide a fantastic backdrop to a continually evolving programme of events aimed at many different audiences.

Current evidence shows that 70% of visitors are from outside Scotland compared with 90% at Edinburgh Castle. It is hoped that the new attraction will boost the number of English and overseas visitors wanting to make the trip to Stirling. Recent research indicates* that 23% of visitors to Stirling are there for sightseeing, with 16% stating that the castle is the main reason for their visit. Overall some 69% of visitors intend to go to the castle, making it the area's top attraction. We hope to build and strengthen this position.

Stirling Castle is part of the Stirling Tourism Forum, with other organisations including Stirling Council, VisitScotland and other visitor attractions. This offers the opportunity to share information and explore joint marketing initiatives to benefit the whole area. The local market, including the family market and Historic Scotland Friends, has potential for growth with living history events, and events where the castle acts as a stage, encouraging multiple visits. Initiatives such as a park and ride have been piloted to offer an alternative to the limited parking on the esplanade.

Earlier phases of the Stirling Castle Project brought growth in visitor figures. In 1993 there were 290,000 visitors and in 2000, following the opening of the Great Hall, this rose to 420,000. In 2007-08 398,171 people visited the castle, up 3% on the previous year. Following the completion of the palace it is predicted that the visitor figures could peak at 500,000 and settle at around 480,000 a year.

* information taken from Stirling Council, Stirling Visitor Survey 2006.

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