

# **West Lothian, the value for money alternative for “Swifties on a Budget”**

**West Lothian hopes to cash in on the financial bandwagon rolling behind Taylor Swift’s weekend gig in Edinburgh.**

Visit West Lothian has been promoting itself as a value for money alternative to the city for “Swifties on a Budget” coming to the capital for the global star’s sell out Eras tour dates this weekend.

An estimated 220,000 fans will attend the concerts on three days from Friday night.

Preparation for the event have seen hotel prices soaring in the capital with accommodation at a premium.

Stuart Ness, the council’s Tourism and Town Centre Manager told a meeting of the Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth Building Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel (PDSP): “You can get much more value for money in West Lothian.”

Mr Ness revealed an update in the developing tourism strategy and the role of Visit West Lothian to councillors.

It was the deputy provost Stuart Heggie who highlighted the obvious draw of proximity to Edinburgh for such big attractions as the Taylor Swift concerts.

“Are we maximising our potential as an alternative

destination with good links," he asked.

Mr Ness told the committee that a promotional campaign based on the forthcoming concerts had been running on Visit West Lothian's social media platform.

He added: "Visit West Lothian does indeed look to maximise its potential. We have just delivered a mini promotional campaign based on the Taylor Swift concerts highlighting the fact that with the increase of hotel costs in Edinburgh you can get much more value for money by staying in West Lothian and using public transport to attend the concert.

He added: "That was a series of blog posts and social media promotions around the same theme.

"It's something we do. Continue to highlight the connectivity between West Lothian and specifically Edinburgh and we are constantly promoting the accommodation we have in West Lothian as a result."

A report to the committee outlined: "A series of weekly blog posts have been created to promote West Lothian as a visitor destination. Each blog post focuses on a different topic ranging from "Exploring West Lothian's Culinary Delights", where West Lothian residents were asked to recommend restaurants to visitors, to "Swifties on a Budget? Consider West Lothian for Taylor's Scottish Dates", where the spotlight was on West Lothian accommodation options for the upcoming Taylor Swift concert at Murrayfield."

Linlithgow Councillor Tom Conn asked if that theme could be further developed to encourage tourists to use West Lothian as a base for visiting Edinburgh, Glasgow or Stirling, potentially bringing an income into the county through hotels and local restaurants.

Stuart Barrie of Visit West Lothian said that was part of the strategy for development he was keen to see unfold.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter