

RE: FW: Áfangastaðaáætlun Vestfjarða - forgangsröðun aðgerða

Til : simbahollin@gmail.com
Frá : Hjördís Þráinsdóttir
Heiti : RE: FW: Áfangastaðaáætlun Vestfjarða - forgangsröðun aðgerða
Málsnúmer : 2017110020
Málsaðili : Visit Westfjords
Skráð dags : 24.11.2017 10:13:00
Höfundur : Hjördís Þráinsdóttir
Viðhengi image001.jpgimage001.jpg

Hi! Thanks for this. I will put it on bæjarráðs agenda for Monday.

Hjördís Þráinsdóttir
Skjalastjóri Ísafjarðarbæjar

From: Simbahöllin [mailto:simbahollin@gmail.com]
Sent: 24. nóvember 2017 08:40
To: Hjördís Þráinsdóttir
Subject: Re: FW: Áfangastaðaáætlun Vestfjarða - forgangsröðun aðgerða

Hi Hjördís,

My name is Wouter, formadur for Ibusamtak in Þingeyri... we had a meeting about your report and I mixed it with my personal experience in tourism as owner of Simbahollin. I have been running for 10 years our coffeehouse and also a horse and bike rental and we have seen the change in tourism.

I am not sure if you are the person to address all my opinions and views to. I also intend to forward this email to Diana (markastofa) and Magnea (atvest).

Here we go:

-Great to make the winter roads and conditions better explained. Specifically: **the road over Hrafnseyri** heidi... mark better in wintertime what the conditions are... Even when it is open, it is for tourist maybe not the best idea to drive. And when the road is closed, it could be better advertised before drivers arrive in Þingeyri. (maybe already in Isafjordur?). People are either very frustrated or very determined to try anyway to continue. They ignore the closed road, get stuck... and later call our rescue team.

- **viking site**: a difficult issue.. nobody really knows what to do... there needs to be made a plan... the organisation around that viking idea/area is not active, there is no money left and there has never been made a management plan.

A total maintenance operation will cost a lot of money (basically all the walls need to be rebuild again)... **for now it is important to fix or change a part, since it is even dangerous.** If I talk for myself and my experience in tourism (Simbahollin). It is not fun to do, but I think it is better to take one step back in order to keep at least something happening, before it all might go to waste. Maybe make the area smaller, forget the ship and give up the bigger idea and just focus for now on a nice and well maintained "viking picnic area". The bigger project is too big and extended for local people to

manage. Or should we advertise it and ask an exterior company or investor to run it... But I am afraid this will result in a profit driven corporation. A project of this size only runs a large groups, Cruise Ship?, while not everyone is a fan of Thingeyri becoming a cruise ship passenger destination. I fear that Þingeyri can not handle this kind of industry.

- **marking road and hiking trails**... YES, especially the shorter trails (less then 10km / less then 4 hours) People going for longer trails, usually know how to handle themselves, use maps, gps, Also the road toward Kaldbakkur could be marked better.

Shorter trails: to Sandafell, to Myrafell (Nupur) and around Sandafell (through the Toyota forest ;-)... pretty easy trails and easy to mark and there is some priority in this.

- the **centre of Þingeyri** needs more public services, and! garbage bins: Today the gas station and Simbahollin are paying for lots of garbage left by tourists. Isafjordurbaer is not willing to see this problem and tells us that there are garbage bins at the campsite. Correct, and! tourist stop in the centre and it is there where the service is needed.

We could need more signs showing people to the campsite, swimming pool, toilets, out of town (horse house, mountains,....)

Some speed limiters or active signs would be welcome to slow down traffic in summertime.

- **Dyjandi**: my personal view: I am not a fan to commercialise every nature pearl... The amazing experience about Iceland is the pure nature! It speaks for itself. I understand that there needs to come more services, but do we need to have a restaurant? I fear that this will result quickly in a commercial atmosphere.. not much to do with small local authentic experience.

It might be a threat to the companies in Þingeyri... Many visitors pass by Þingeyri and need to take a break and use our services.

A upscale visitor centre offering similar service, might become competition and have a negative impact for us.

And when the tunnel is finished, we already will need to make extra effort to make people visit Þingeyri. And we have still some years left to make a plan and a strategy.

I heard an idea to make the detour to Hrafnseyri and over the heidi into a scenic road.

Westjords is different and still unspoiled... we should value this and protect this. Please be careful and find a nice balance between offering needed services and keeping the Dynjandi area nice, but also to keep it "remote", authentic, simple, ...

Isafjordbær is investing in a new service house for the campsite in Þingeyri... I guess this is done having in mind that Dynjandi visitors need a close by service area.

-We would like to have made a **scenic walk** in our village... Italian landscape architects made in coloboration with Westfjords residency a study and a proposal for a walking trail through the village, linking the points of interests, heritage, scenic views,... Who can help to develop this?

- the swimming pool in Þingeyri would like to have **outside hot tubs**. Tourists are asking about this. Even some visitors walk away when they see we don't have it.

- A Japanese architect has made a outdoor pavilion proposal with a low maintenance park/ garden around it. This project has to potential to be an important landmark and become THE attraction to visit Þingeyri... We have been working on this for two year as a part of town revitalization. Isafjordbaer is positive, but we could need extra support. Please contact simbahollin@gmail.com for more info.

- I agree to have more diversity in the hotel and gistiheimilum. Can you change people? ;-) Not every one has the same view or understanding of what tourism is about.

What about **airbnb**? Can this become more regulated?

- **cruise ship tourism**: 100% agree we need a strong policy! So far, there is not much negative impact in Þingeyri. To me the cruise ship industry is adding to the economy, that is important. But tourism also a way to develop extra services for our community and increase the value of living here. Cruise ship tourism is a threat to this vision.

-I feel still the need in Westfjords to have a proper, full or half time tourism manager or even multiple managers. People that are connected to the local businesses and the people in the different areas. It would make the communication easier, the supervision better and depending on their skills, they even could help start ups or local entrepreneurs and steer things better.

In order to have a good industry, you need to invest in it.

- **Svalvogar vegur** and area: This is one of the last "secrets" or hidden gems of Westfjords. The road and area is not ready and safe to allow a high number of visitors!

I have talked to locals and local landowners and a **majority would like to have rather a restriction on the amount of cars driving around**. Most cars are not suitable for this road.

Also some people are not prepared and get scared suddenly. Some clear info is needed, but not extra promotion!

I am told that this road is not covered in the insurance policy of rental cars... since it not a public road, but a road open for public: if this is correct: we need to make a sign explaining this. This could help to attract / restrict the kind of vehicles and visitors.

The main "issue" is motorised traffic. It is a paradise for bikers, hikers, few times horse riders, ... but it is a total killer when a too many 4hjól, motorcycles or loud jeeps are cruising by.

Hikers and bikers are telling us that this is on of the best experience in Iceland when finishing a ride or walk: we need to be very careful about promoting this!

However: a certain amount of traffic is actually good: if hikers or bikers run into trouble and there is limited mobile phone coverage, then passing by jeeps have been very helpful to people.

A certain daily scheduled jeep tour would offer also the possibilities to drop of hikers and pick up hikers on certain spots. For this to work, we need to collaborate more and decide what we want to build up and achieve.

Our experience as a bike rental: it is growing, often more challenging that people are looking for, BUT when they finish, they are usually very proud of themselves and that makes the experience so special. We also mainly suggest people to go to the lighthouse and back the same way (Dyrafjordur). The loop around is not suitable for everyone, it is a mental killer. For those who are prepared, this is a world class experience... I have had world famous champion bikers doing riding the road and he told me that was in his top 10 bike experiences in his life.

You maybe realise by the amount of text I write that Svalvogar road is very precious to me (not as a business owner, but as someone who is passionate). **I don't think everything needs to be commercialised and / or advertised**. The "good"tourists also like to discover, be surprised, be taken a bit out of their comfort zone.

We need to provide a good infrastructure in our area, but we also need to keep certain areas pure and unspoiled! Maybe even keep "tourism" away.

- the good and the bad tourists: we see the last two years a big change in the kind of visitors.

A few years ago the visitors could be described as travellers, people who understood the situation, had respect for nature, people, animals. Today we see more "the self centred tourists": in a hurry, taking selfies everywhere, not polite and sometimes clueless... Some people are a danger on the small roads or into the wild nature.

We might soon have some serious accidents happening... especially in the wintertime... people driving in wintertime in a Toyota Yaris to Westjords, sleeping in their car in freezing temperatures, going over mountain roads, being unprepared, not properly dressed, hardly speak or understand English. We are not the area for those kind of visitors.

How can we attract the right tourists? Won't we attract the right tourist by doing passive marketing? Lets be the underdog, lets "play" to be the forgotten area. Iceland and Westjords are known enough by now. When you offer a too quick and easy access to tourists, you will attract those tourists who need this. The good tourist are clever and creative enough to find their information. I rather have less tourists, but the good ones: people that are fun to spend time with and that are willing to pay a fair price for their experience,

- in general about tourism: I speak for myself as owner of Simbahöllin.

In my opinion we still lack a more clear and stronger stefn about tourism in general. Tourism has been growing very fast and some parts of Iceland have pissed in their shoes.

Westjords is still pretty authentic and the level of service is high, Most businesses operating here are local owned and have been run for many years with great passion.

I feel that the newer companies in Iceland are extremely profit driven and are damaging the image and experience that tourist came for some years ago.

With the rise of cruise ships in Isafjordur, there is some greediness going on as well. We should be careful with this and not encourage this mentality.

I understand companies need to run and do business, but tourism is in the first place a "service" industry.

We choose for a small and authentic business in Þingeyri and knew it would take time to build up. And we had to do things alternative... work with volunteers, invest everything year after year into the company. I feel lately that there is very little sympathy and understanding for the situation where small companies start and operate in.

The rules and regulation are the same for everyone. Understandable, but maybe not always fair: small vs big company, remote vs Rvk, profit vs idealism, ... Today using volunteers / friends and family is not allowed anymore, you are expected to pay correct high salaries to yourself, you need to have an official and costly bookkeeping, you need more and more licenses. And on top Westjords suffered a 25% decrease in tourism. This is not a motivating atmosphere for small companies to start in.

I spend nearly 1.000.000kr to have the needed drivers licenses to drive and pull a horse trailer, transfer people and operate my tractor. And this is just a small example.

I am a bit afraid that the amount of bureaucracy will demotivate people and make it very difficult for especially new and small companies, young families to start, while we need exactly those families / businesses to join the community.

Not to even mention how the invest part is... taking loans is just impossible and puts a pressure on companies to turn them into money minded little monsters.

What can we do about this?

In our coffeehouse, we choose to make almost all our product daily fresh and by ourselves, it gives us pride and pleasure. We like to lengthen the season: every year we open earlier and close later. Of course we are open on Sundays. AND: I am worried that the current regulations are forcing us to do the

opposite!

We can not continue to invest in our business, provide longer and better service and be expected at the same time to pay as much as possible taxes and salaries... there has to be room to be flexible.

There are different ways to contribute to the society: usually those companies that are profit driven, they pay a fair and good amount of taxes. And those companies that are more impact driven and pioneering, they pay their contribution to community by building up services, create a new industry, by creating new opportunities. The tax office in Iceland has a pretty narrow understanding of this principle.

It is great to invest in infrastructure, but don't we need to invest in the people part? Not just in hardware, but also in "software".

In the end, it are exactly those motivated, passionate people that are building up the real image for the area and set the tone.

None of the people who started 10 years ago a small business in tourism in Westfjords was focused on money... it was all about passion, life style and long term building up their company. It is sad to see how tourism has become such a greedy industry in some parts of the country. Lets not go into that direction in Westfjords.

Thanks for reading!

All the best,

Wouter

Kaffihús Simbahöllin

Fjarðargata 5

470 Þingeyri

Sími: 899 6659

KT: 450509-1320

<http://www.simbahollin.is/>



2017-11-15 10:47 GMT+00:00 Hjördís Þráinsdóttir <hjordis@isafjordur.is>:

Sæl verið þið, stjórnarmenn hverfisráða.

Meðfylgjandi eru drög að forgangsröðun aðgerða í áfangastaðaáætlun Vestfjarða sem tekin voru fyrir á bæjarráðsfundi á mánudaginn. Bæjarráð óskaði eftir umsögnum hverfisráða en Visit Westfjords hefur óskað eftir að umsagnir berist fyrir 24. nóvember. Þar sem fyrirvarinn sem við fengum er skammur væri frábært ef það væri hægt að taka þetta fyrir sem fyrst á stjórnarfundum hverfisráða, séu þeir á dagskrá fyrir þennan tíma. Þið sendið okkur svo umsagnirnar um hæl.

Hjördís Þráinsdóttir

Skjalastjóri Ísafjarðarbæjar

Ísafjarðarbær, Stjórnsýsluhúsinu, Pósthólf 56, 400 Ísafjörður.

Sími: 450 8018, Fax: 450 8008, Netfang: [hjordi@isafjordur.is](mailto:hjordis@isafjordur.is) - Vefur: www.isafjordur.is

Ísafjarðarbær er Flateyri, Hnífsdalur, Ísafjörður, Suðureyri & Þingeyri - auk þess blómleg býli, strandsvæði og ósnortin víðerni.



The Westfjords - one of Iceland's most spectacular regions - *Lonely Planet*

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "**Magnea Garðarsdóttir**" <magnea@vestfiridir.is>

Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2017 at 9:22 AM +0000

Subject: Áfangastaðaáætlun Vestfjarða - forgangsroðun aðgerða

To: "Jón Páll Hreinsson" <jonpall@bolungarvik.is>, "Gísli Halldór Halldórsson" <gisli@isafjordur.is>, "petur@sudavik.is" <petur@sudavik.is>

Cc: "Þórdís Sif Sigurðardóttir" <thordissif@isafjordur.is>, "Helgi Hjálmtýsson" <helgi@bolungarvik.is>

Góðan daginn,

Nú er vinna við áfangastaðaáætlun Vestfjarða (DMP) komin á fullt og verða á næstunni haldnir opnir fundir til að kynna vinnuna betur og til að forgangsraða aðgerðum innan hvers svæðis.

Unnar verða þrjár aðgerðaáætlanir í áfangastaðaáætlun Vestfjarða og skiptist áætlunin í Norðursvæði, Suðursvæði og Strandir og Reykhólar.

Ein af afurðum áfangastaðaáætlunar er forgangsroðun verkefna og viljum við biðja ykkur um að taka afstöðu í þeim lið. Búið er að taka saman lista yfir aðgerðir sem sótt hefur verið um í Framkvæmdasjóð ferðamannastaða, sem settar hafa verið fram í Landsáætlun og sem tilgreindar voru í vinnu vegna Stefnumótunar vestfirskrar ferðaþjónustu.

Við viljum biðja ykkur að skoða þennan lista og forgangsraða þeim aðgerðum sem eru þar að finna, og endilega bætið á listann ef það er eitthvað sem vantar þar inn. Í skjalinu er ekki að finna fullmótaðar hugmyndir aðeins lista enda enn um vinnuskjal að ræða.

Á opnum vinnufundum verður jafnframt fjallað um forgangsroðun verkefna og verða niðurstöður dregnar sama í forgangsroðun Vestfjarða, þær niðurstöður verða síðan sendar sveitarfélögum til samþykkis.

Þetta þarf að vinnast frekar hratt og bið því ykkur um að vera búin að yfirfara listann og koma með ykkar hugmyndir fyrir 24. nóvember næstkomandi.

Meðfylgjandi læt ég fylgja með grein sem að [Ferðamálastofa](#) birti á dögnum um verkefnið

Með bestu kveðjum og fyrirfram þökk

Magnea Garðarsdóttir

Verkefnastjóri/ project manager

Visit Westfjords

Árnagötu 2-4, 400 Ísafirði

Sími [+354 450 3051](tel:+3544503051). Fax [+354 450 3005](tel:+3544503005)

GSM [+354 625-8284](tel:+3546258284)

www.westfjords.is

-

This message (including any attachments) contains confidential information intended for a specific individual and purpose, and is protected by law. If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this message and are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, or distribution of this message, or the taking of any action based on it, is strictly prohibited.

-

-