

## Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Review of the Marketing of the Borough – Summary of evidence

Evidence received during the review	Area for recommendations
<p><b>The local visitor economy</b></p> <p>The visitor economy can be wide ranging in terms of the type of business included within it. Primarily the visitor economy would fall in to two categories; attractions including the natural environment, culture, retail, sport, leisure facilities, festivals, and services including hotels, pubs and restaurants, and day-to-day services.</p> <p>The Tees Valley visitor economy, in common with other areas of the North East, experienced a period of growth from 2003 – 2009. The number of overnight visitors travelling to Tees Valley rose by 26% and visitor expenditure rose by more than £40 million over this time period. The most recent information available is drawn from the research undertaken on behalf of One North East in 2010 by Global Tourism Solutions, using the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model (STEAM). Key headlines from the report are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2.1 million overnight tourists spending 4.6 million nights in the area</li> <li>- 13 million day visits</li> <li>- Total economic value of £563m (overnight visitors £233m, day visitors £330m)</li> <li>- 7,200 direct tourism jobs (full time equivalents)</li> <li>- 1800 jobs supported by indirect revenue from tourism</li> <li>- Two thirds of overnight visitors to Tees Valley stay with friends and relatives</li> </ul> <p>This data is not now produced for Stockton Borough and there would be a significant cost to obtain it in the future. The report looks at the volume and value of visitors to Tees Valley in 2009.</p> <p>It is important to recognise the impact of business visitors and people visiting the area for a specific service for example the Billingham dental practice that has several thousand visits a year from across the sub-region.</p> <p>A 2008 research survey carried out by One North East showed that the main visitors to the area (45.5%) were</p>	

## Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Review of the Marketing of the Borough – Summary of evidence

between 18 – 24 years old and that of those staying for one to three nights 40.3% were 25 – 34 years old and 25.7% were 45 - 54 years old and these mainly arrived from Yorkshire and Humberside. The top four reasons for visiting were Exploring Towns & Cities 44.6%, Exploring the Countryside 41.6%, Events 32.2% and Shopping 30.9%.

Overall visitor numbers to attractions in Tees Valley in 2010 grew by 6% in comparison to 2009. 2 attractions in Stockton were listed amongst the top ten most visited attractions in 2010 in the Tees Valley:

Preston Hall and Museum\* 89,054 visitors

Saltholme 80,316 visitors

\*closed during Nov/Dec 2010. Source: One North East: North East Visits to Attractions Report 2010

Events and specialist markets are widely recognised as being an integral part of the Borough's visitor economy. Visitor figures and analysis for SIRF 2012 shows that:

- 95.7% of visitors thought that SIRF is a good thing for Stockton Borough.
- 84% of visitors thought SIRF is good for promoting Stockton as a place to visit.
- 89% of visitors thought that supporting SIRF is a good use of Stockton Borough Council's resources.
- 22% of visitors had attended SIRF 20 times or more.
- Estimated income of £1.3m was generated within the Borough as a result of the festival (this excludes additional spend arising from later visits that are a consequence of the profile of SIRF). Average level of spend was £18.16.
- 1,607 participants and 68 groups participated in the Community Carnival,
- 21 groups were new to the carnival
- SIRF presented more than 110 performances and exhibitions to estimated audiences of over 70,000

## Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Review of the Marketing of the Borough – Summary of evidence

<p>people.</p> <p>Sports events are also increasingly important to the local economy. The Triathlon and River Rat Race are two of the most high profile events on the River Tees with participation figures increasing over the last 2 years.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Event</td> <td>2010</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> </tr> <tr> <td>River Rat Race</td> <td>760</td> <td>981</td> <td>1200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Triathlon</td> <td>400</td> <td>560</td> <td>Did not take place</td> </tr> </table> <p>The Stockton Cycling Festival continues to develop and 4000 people took part in the 2012 event, which included both elite events and mass participation.</p> <p>During the course of the review Preston Hall has re-opened and is projected to be a major attraction in the Tees Valley. Since re-opening there have been 79,000 visits (as of November 2012).</p>	Event	2010	2011	2012	River Rat Race	760	981	1200	Triathlon	400	560	Did not take place	
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<p><b>Changes to support arrangements for the visitor economy</b></p> <p>Nationally, VisitEngland’s role as the tourist board is to grow the value of tourism by working in partnership with the industry to deliver marketing campaigns and to provide advocacy for the industry and visitors. National Government policy demonstrated through VisitEngland’s funding and marketing activity is designed to embrace such a public/private partnership approach.</p> <p>VisitEngland oversees the national tourism strategy – England: A strategic Framework for Tourism 2010-2020. The strategy sets out an ‘attract and disperse’ approach to marketing England as a destination to domestic and established overseas markets. They will work with tourism partners and the private sector at a national and local level based but this is based on key criteria for destination management organisations.</p> <p>VisitEngland has recently secured Regional Growth Funding for a 3-Year tourism project, ‘Growing Tourism Locally’ aimed at stimulating economic growth and jobs at a local level. The funding will be allocated to a number of destination management organisations in England that will work closely with VisitEngland to design</p>													

## Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Review of the Marketing of the Borough – Summary of evidence

and implement local campaigns.

Visit Britain recently announced a new strategy aiming to attract 40m visitors a year by 2020, compared to the 31m that currently visit. The aim is to build on Britain's strengths such as heritage and the exposure gained through the London 2012 Games, and address weaknesses in perceptions relating to 'natural beauty, food, value, and welcome'.

There has been substantial change to the support and funding provided on a regional and sub-regional basis. Formal regional structures to support the visitor economy ceased following the closure of One North East (ONE) in March 2012. ONE marketing activity ended in May 2010 as part of the restrictions on public sector spending this included North East marketing campaigns, North East Visitor Guide, marketing analysis and visitor attractions footfall data.

Former One North East promotional assets, such as branding and marketing collateral, have been protected through various acquisition and transfer arrangements. They remain available for Tees Valley use if desired.

The Northern Tourism Alliance, formed in 2011, is currently an informal partnership between Visit County Durham, Newcastle Gateshead Initiative, Northumberland Tourism, Hadrian's Wall Heritage and the North East Hotels Association. It is emerging as the possible public sector successor in relation to the promotion of tourism across the region. An officer from Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) or one of the Councils has represented the Tees Valley at meetings so far.

Across the North East and Yorkshire all tourism and destination management organisations have undergone some form of review due to funding cuts. The majority have reduced the scale and scope of operations and are moving towards more private sector-led funding and governance arrangements.

Visit Tees Valley (VTV), the Area Tourism Partnership and Destination Management Organisation, was part of TVU which was subject to a full review that reported in March 2011. This resulted in the organisation being reduced to approximately one third of its previous size. TVU is now more focussed on strategic leadership of the sub-region.

VTV was responsible for the strategic direction of tourism in Tees Valley. Its priorities were based around

## Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Review of the Marketing of the Borough – Summary of evidence

<p>improving the physical product, developing Tees Valley as an events destination, upskilling the tourism workforce, and marketing to improve the perceptions of Tees Valley. In 2010/11 VTV had a budget of £810k of which £213k was for marketing. TVU received direct funding from ONE of £600k towards the operational costs of VTV and all of that funding was withdrawn. An example of development of the workforce was the 'My Tees Valley / My Stockton' training courses, which were designed to increase local tourism industry staff awareness of the area's heritage and other attractions.</p> <p>Most marketing and business support activities for the visitor economy ceased in Tees Valley when VTV was wound up in March 2011 following the loss of that funding. At the time it was recognised that following the end of sub-regional activity and the reduction in direct support provided to the sector, it would be necessary for local tourism businesses to operate their own networks and play an increasing role in their marketing. TVU hosted a temporary tourism post focusing on exit strategies, and this post ended in March 2012.</p> <p>TVU's marketing priorities are focused on attracting investment from priority sectors and promoting the new enterprise zone offer. The visitor and lifestyle assets in the Tees Valley are seen as an important element of the overall Tees Valley quality of life marketing proposition to potential sources of investment. The new TVU website and marketing information are continuing to be developed and will highlight quality of life aspects such as attractions, leisure, education and health provision in the area.</p>	
<p><b>Changes in services provided by SBC Regeneration and Economic Development</b></p> <p>SBC's tourism service has been the subject of two Efficiency, Improvement &amp; Transformation (EIT) reviews. As a result of the review of Events, Arts and Tourism the vacant Tourism Promotions Assistant post was deleted from the structure. This was followed by the review of the whole Regeneration &amp; Economic Development service which considered the role of the Council in relation to tourism. In the light of the need to reduce expenditure and reprioritise support, it concluded that R&amp;ED's role within tourism should be encouraging business growth and enabling the sector to support itself. This role was to be undertaken as part of the work of the wider business engagement role of the service. As part of that process the Tourism Promotions Manager post was deleted from the structure and a visitor economy specialism role was developed</p>	

## Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Review of the Marketing of the Borough – Summary of evidence

<p>as part of one post within the business engagement team. The focus of the work is therefore now on providing support to visitor economy businesses to assist with their growth plans, ensure they are aware of and have access to the support available, and that they are able to benefit from the visitor attraction opportunities in the Borough.</p> <p>The Tourist Information Centre (TIC) was in the Shambles but has recently moved to 134b High Street and has re-opened as the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) within the Rediscover Stockton Shop. It is the frontline customer facing part of the service and is run by 2.5 FTE staff. Stockton was the highest ranked for customer service in the Tees Valley following a recent VisitEngland Mystery Shopper survey.</p> <p>Following the recommendations of both EIT reviews, further consideration is to be given to visitor information functions being made available in the Customer Contact Centres and other appropriate premises.</p>	<p><b>Develop a Visitor Economy Sector Action Plan</b></p>
<p><b>Ongoing development of Stockton as a visitor destination</b></p> <p>Stockton Borough Council is continuing to support the visitor economy through its £20m investment in improvements in Stockton Town Centre, the £7m investment in Preston Hall &amp; Park, the expansion of the events programme as part of the strategic development ambition to create stronger links and visitor flow between Stockton Town Centre and the River Tees, and the further expansion of the programme of specialist markets. Investment is also planned in the Globe Theatre which will provide a 2000 capacity conference and events venue, and the RSPB continues to invest in the facilities at the Saltholme International Nature Reserve.</p>	
<p><b>Feedback from the local visitor economy</b></p> <p>The Committee has heard from representatives of the local economy. Saltholme Nature Reserve described their experiences since setting up in the Borough in 2009. Key issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Saltholme attracts over 70,000 per year. There has been a small decline in visitor numbers since the opening year, in line with other RSPB reserves in the north, including in family groups. 50% of visitors live within 10 miles, 75% are repeat visitors. The economy appears to be having some effect as</li> </ul>	

## Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Review of the Marketing of the Borough – Summary of evidence

<p>although the attraction is free to enter, there is a chargeable car park and most people arrive by car due to location. Improvements to public transport would be of benefit, such as bus and cycle lane provision (nb. since the meeting the Sunday bus route has been re-instated for a trial period).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Marketing included joint advertising with neighbouring reserves, RSPB website, free local publications including Council newspapers, social media sites and local radio. Joint marketing also took place with sites in the Yorkshire region. Representatives from the Washington RSPB site had visited Saltholme to understand its approach. It was identified that further work may be necessary to increase local awareness.</li><li>- the Reserve expressed a desire to be included in promotional materials for restaurants and cafes as Saltholme had a 98 seater cafe.</li><li>- the Reserve often attracted school visits and during the course of the review the project entered and won the National Lottery's 'Best Education Category for Life Long Learning' award, receiving almost 10,000 votes from the public.</li></ul> <p>Mohujos Restaurant in Billingham provided a briefing of their activity, including reference to their marketing techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- impact of the recession and the challenges Mohujo's faced for continued growth, and how the Restaurant had benefitted from the small business NDR reduction scheme;</li><li>- in terms of marketing, the business has grown via word of mouth rather than heavy marketing campaigns, however there was usage of the web and Facebook, and a desire to work in partnership with other businesses and local organisations such as Billingham Forum where pre-theatre meals had been offered at discounted prices on production of a voucher from the Forums brochure. They have also investigated other opportunities such as entering into online offers on Groupon.</li><li>- positive response received from participating in local events such as the Stockton Riverside Festival which was funded by the Authority and Stockton Town Team, and involvement in events was seen as worthwhile; Mohujos were involved in the World Market Festival in September. It was suggested that</li></ul>	<p><b>Identify opportunities for local businesses to gain greater benefit</b></p>
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## Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Review of the Marketing of the Borough – Summary of evidence

<p>There is an annual marketing campaign programme, and available resources are focussed on each year's priority areas. The 11 key messages for 2012-13 have covered a range of issues (for example welfare reform and school building), but particularly relevant for the review have been the following: 'Re-opening of Preston Park', and the 'Exciting year-round programme of events'.</p> <p>Events have been adopted as a strategic priority to increase economic activity and as a cost effective method of changing perceptions of the area. The events programme includes SIRF, Stockton Sparkles, Infinity Festival, Fireworks, BIFF, and sporting events including the Duathlon, Rat Race (as part of Take to the Tees), and cycling festival. Promotional work for SIRF now takes place in regional towns and cities including Newcastle, Harrogate and York.</p> <p>Individual SBC attractions and events have specific marketing approaches including the revamped branding of Preston Park Museum and Grounds, and themed leaflets and web presence for Stockton Sparkles and the Stockton Fireworks.</p> <p>Stockton Town Centre Regeneration is being promoted under the brand of 'Rediscover Stockton', and also has a high street presence combined with the TIC in the 'Rediscover Stockton' shop. This is also one of the 11 key campaigns for 2012-13.</p> <p>Within the Borough, residents receive the Stockton News publication and this has been refreshed with a new design that fits in with the new approach to marketing, and includes promotion of relevant attractions and events.</p> <p>Local non-SBC run attractions (including White Water Course, ARC, Georgian Theatre, Saltholme, Teesside Princess) are supported with a range of cross promotion which sees their details included on appropriate marketing information for no charge.</p>	
<p><b>Web presence</b></p> <p>Following on from the closure of Visit Tees Valley, the associated website was closed down in March 2012. The data behind the website was also linked to the Visit Stockton website via a system called Desti.ne which was no longer be funded as of March 2012. As a result of this the former standalone website for Visit Stockton</p>	

**Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Review of the Marketing of the Borough – Summary of evidence**

<p>was redirected to the Leisure and Visiting page within the Council’s website (<a href="http://www.stockton.gov.uk/citizenservices/leisureandents">www.stockton.gov.uk/citizenservices/leisureandents</a>). This option carries no cost associated with it and houses links to external sites e.g. accommodation and visitor attractions and also a link to the Stockton Visitor Guide. Stockton Council has full control over the site and pages can be reviewed and updated as frequently as required.</p> <p>There is currently a separate site for eateries within the Borough called Bite to Eat (<a href="http://www.bitetoeat.co.uk">www.bitetoeat.co.uk</a>). This site is controlled and maintained by an external agency and we would incur costs every time updates or changes need to be made. It is not possible to easily measure if this site having any effect on the number of visitors to the restaurants. The need for and benefit of having such a website will be discussed with businesses through a restaurant promotions group that is currently being set up.</p> <p>The whole of the Council’s web presence is currently being reviewed.</p>	<p><b>Support the promotion of local restaurants</b></p> <p><b>Develop a visitor section within the new SBC website</b></p>
<p><b>Promotion of the Heritage of the Borough</b></p> <p>As the Council’s Heritage Strategy (2011) recognises, ‘promoting our heritage is not only about helping local people take pride in Stockton’s story but is also about increasing awareness amongst our visitors. Stockton’s heritage is enjoyed by its many visitors to the region, which tend to be business tourists, people visiting friends and family and day visitors. There are huge opportunities for these groups to enjoy Stockton’s heritage offer and encourage longer stays and repeat visits. Ensuring these visitors get access to the best information and know where to visit will ensure that Stockton’s heritage is promoted on a wider geographical basis.’</p> <p>The following Strategy actions are particularly relevant to the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) To provide the greatest possible access to our heritage for all of our communities and visitors to the borough.</li> <li>3) To market our heritage as part of a wider strategy in re-shaping the perception and image of the borough.</li> <li>4) To continue to conserve the historic and natural environment with the support of local groups, societies and volunteers through our on-going regeneration, environment and research programmes.</li> </ul>	

## Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Review of the Marketing of the Borough – Summary of evidence

Action 3 includes:

- Develop the visitor experience through heritage events and festivals.
- Promote cultural / historic and natural heritage tourism.
- Increase length of stay of visitors promoting the wealth of heritage and places to visit / see.
- Use the promotion of heritage assets as a key driver for changing perceptions and creating a new image brand.
- Develop a recognisable heritage identity and presentation style of heritage information.
- Ensure good distribution of heritage material (e.g. trails and leaflets) to Tourist Information Centres and other key visitor outlets.

Information was received during the review from Eaglescliffe resident John Fletcher in relation to how the Borough can be marketed, focussing on the Borough's industrial heritage. The information summarises the Borough's railway and industrial history and outlined a number of ways to ensure the physical remains of the original Stockton-Darlington 1825 Railway can be preserved. Original remains include the trackbed that is visible in Eaglescliffe including a section in Preston Park. Interpretation around the Borough includes plaques on Bridge House and, Yarm Town Hall, displays in Preston Hall Museum, and a number of street names in the Borough have been named after significant people and events.

Suggestions are made to encourage those visiting the area with family stay longer, combine railway heritage with promotion of the wider engineering history of the Borough, and join up the promotion of the railways in Stockton with local existing attractions, including Darlington. It also suggests ensuring that front line staff (taxi drivers, hotel staff, restaurant staff) are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their local area and the positive impression this gives.

It was recognised in both Mr Fletcher's submission, and during discussion with officers at Committee, that the opportunities to undertake large scale promotion of the Borough's railway history in particular are limited given the few remaining physical remains, and the presence of established railway-focussed visitor attractions at York, Darlington and Shildon.

Future interpretation work includes the planned 1825 railway themed artwork as part of the St John's Crossing

**Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Review of the Marketing of the Borough – Summary of evidence**

junction improvements. There is a new mural on Bishop Street, and the Stockton Town Centre regeneration may contain an automaton with a heritage theme, and other relevant street features.

A local Heritage Plaque scheme has been adopted by SBC and a plaque is expected to be installed on the former home of Dr McGonigle in the coming months.

A website dedicated to describing the heritage and history of the Borough is in the early stages of development and was showcased to the Committee. It has been produced by an external organisation and is an option for the Council to pursue. The website would be searchable by theme/event/person etc., and may include the potential for user generated content.

**Support the development of the Stockton Borough heritage website**