

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**11TH FEBRUARY 2010**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Regeneration & Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Bob Cook**

**DRAFT TOURISM & VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY 2010 - 2015**

1. Summary

This report is to introduce the Draft Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy, to highlight and present the aims and objectives set out in the strategy, the reason for the strategy and the need for it to feed into that of the Regeneration Strategy, the Regional and sub Regional Tourism Strategies and Plans.

2. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- i) Approve the Draft Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy
- ii) Endorse the aims, objectives and priorities set out within the Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To realise the ultimate vision of creating a more attractive visitor destination and increasing visitor spend therefore generating job opportunities and boosting the local economy.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

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**SUMMARY**

This report is to introduce the Draft Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy and highlight and present the aims and objectives set out in the strategy, the reason for the strategy and the need for it to feed into that of the Regeneration Strategy, the Regional and Sub Regional Tourism Strategies and Plans.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are recommended to:

- i) Approve the Draft Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy
- ii) Endorse the aims, objectives and priorities set out within the Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy

**DETAIL**

1. Tourism is recognised nationally as a key sector for the economy and vital for regeneration, with £86 billion spent annually on UK tourism, including £17 billion by 33 million overseas visitors and £44 billion on day trips by UK residents.
2. Within the Tees Valley the value of the tourism industry in 2006 was £535 million. The visitor economy incorporates:
  - i) Attractions (e.g. natural environment, heritage and culture, iconic buildings, retail, sport, leisure facilities, food and events)
  - ii) Infrastructure (e.g. signs, transport, parking, interpretation, public space and amenities)
  - iii) Services (e.g. hotels and bars, pubs and restaurants, galleries, every day events and day-to-day services)
3. These elements contribute to the vibrancy and sense of place, civic pride, regional and local distinctiveness. This is the first Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy for Stockton Borough and this draft is set to deliver an action plan up until 2015.
4. In recent years the tourism industry has become much more focused, with changing attitudes to leisure and tourism focusing on visitor's needs and requirements. Development of the overall product, together with the emerging new technology and practices and the need to raise the profile of Stockton locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, has highlighted the need for a Tourism & Visitor Strategy for Stockton.

5. Stockton Borough's development priorities are linked to the Regional Tourism Economy Strategy, the Tees Valley Investment Plan and ATMAP (Area Tourism Management Plan) which will be delivered by the new Tees Valley Unlimited structure, in terms of strategic positioning for the Borough.
6. The strategy, with a life span up until 2015, sets out priority objectives to take tourism within the borough forward, increasing visitor stay and spend by changing perceptions of the area and creating an attractive visitor destination. Therefore generating more jobs and training opportunities with a positive impact on the local economy. The main purpose of this strategy will be to increase the overall value of tourism to the local economy.
7. Stockton's Vision is – 'By 2015 Stockton-on-Tees will deliver a high quality visitor experience, continually surprising and exciting our visitors with a vibrant, contemporary and diverse offer in an historically rich environment'. The strategy will provide a framework for strengthening tourism activity and promoting growth in the visitor economy, in and around Stockton on Tees. This plan will be the linkage in the process of developing the Stockton Visitor offer within the regional and national context, with the key to success being our ability to develop and work in partnership with a wide range of agencies, businesses, residents and colleagues, to a common agenda. Through partnership working the strategy will improve tourism facilities, services and events and ensure that people with a disability are able to access and take part in tourism activities.
8. The main areas of improvement are almost identical to the issues raised in the Tees Valley Area Management Plan (ATMAP) document and will be delivered through our 14 main priorities addressed in the action plan, which are: –
  - i) Establish a robust and realistic method of data intelligence across our known and new market segments to enable specific and accurate target marketing. We will deliver through continued Web site development and developing a targeted e-marketing campaign.
  - ii) Actively develop the in-bound coach / travel trade and youth markets alongside new and established events. We will deliver through familiarisation visits for group / coach operators across Tees Valley.
  - iii) Develop and establish regular contact with the non – assessed accommodation providers collate and monitor useful visitor movement and spend. We will deliver by developing a forum of non-assessed partners.
  - iv) Raise standards, environmental awareness, quality and performance across the private and public sector providers, to meet and exceed visitor expectations. We will deliver by all attractions maintaining their VAQAS (Visitor Attraction Quality Assessment Scheme) ratings and improving the Accommodation sector ratings.
  - v) Further develop the events calendar with new and improved festivals and events, and establish the Visitor Experience team alongside the events calendar. We will deliver by developing new initiatives such as the Golf Week & Rat Race.
  - vi) Gather sufficient quality data from the accommodation providers on a quarterly basis to provide the Council with an accurate measure of the value and volume to the visitor economy. We will deliver by collating regular occupancy surveys from our accommodation stock.
  - vii) Assist with the quality assessed upgrades of our visitor accommodation stock. We will deliver by upgrading the ratings of our accommodation providers.

- viii) Improve the position of Stockton Borough as a short break destination and to develop new and existing products, packages and experiences based around the Borough's heritage and countryside. We will deliver by developing heritage & cultural packages and produce new visitor guides targeted at the day visitor market.
- ix) Develop better planning to anticipate and exceed the needs and requirements of all our visitors and residents, whilst upgrading the whole visitor experience by providing quality and accurate tourist and visitor information. We will deliver by improving signage and improving access across the whole visitor sector.
- x) Dramatically improve the overall image and perception of the area by developing in partnership a series of themed marketing campaigns to raise the profile of the Borough nationally, regionally and locally, aimed at increasing visitor numbers and spend all year round. We will deliver by working in partnership to deliver themed marketing campaigns and develop a civic pride initiative.
- xi) Manage and deliver the 'Visitor Experience' at all major events and festivals. We will deliver by establishing the Visitor Experience team at all major events.
- xii) Re-locate the Tourist Information Centre to a more permanent, higher profile location. We will re-locate the TIC to the Shambles.
- xiii) Develop new and existing partnerships and manage them more effectively to continue to develop the tourism potential of the area and increase employment and training opportunities. We will deliver by establishing working forums across the accommodation, restaurants and attraction providers.
- xiv) Work towards developing a 'World Class Welcome' across the Borough's 4 main town centres and across all sectors. We will deliver by developing a 'Welcome All' programme across all sectors.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9. It is expected that the draft Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy will be delivered within existing budgets.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10. There are no known legal implications within this report.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11. This draft Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy 2010 - 2015 is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

- 12. The Draft Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy report impacts on the key policy platform areas of the **Sustainable Community Strategy in the following ways:-**

**Economic Regeneration and Transport** – By increasing visitor spend therefore increasing employment.

**Safer Communities** – Will improve Civic Pride and sense of Community.

**Children and Young People** – Will deliver through events and festivals, also heritage and culture.

**Health and Wellbeing** – Will deliver through sporting events such as Take to the Tees and Golf Week.

**Environment and Housing** – Will deliver through Nature Based Tourism and Greenspaces.

**Supporting Themes:-**

**Stronger Communities** – By improving Civic Pride.

**Older Adults** – Through delivering themed packages such as Golf Week.

**Arts Leisure and Culture** – Through events and festivals with support from the Visitor Experience Team.

**EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

13. This report has undergone the Equality Impact Assessment. The score was 79 indicating the Strategy will have a positive impact.

**CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

14. All appropriate suggestions raised through the consultation process have been incorporated within the strategy, along with the priorities, which are included in the delivery / action plan.
15. Consultation has taken place with colleagues and officers across the Local Authority, visitTeesvalley, ONENorthEast, Members, Parish Council Liaison, Economic Regeneration & Transport Partnership (ERTP) and copies have been placed in the members library, and with some private sector partners e.g. Hotels and Attractions.

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Background Papers - Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy 2010 – 2015 and Regional Tourism Strategy.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors - Will benefit the whole of the Borough, not ward specific.

Property - No direct property implication within this report.