

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

DATE 18 JULY 2019

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

**Health, Leisure & Culture - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Jim Beall
Regeneration & Housing – Lead Cabinet Member – Nigel Cooke**

STOCKTON ON TEES VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY 2019 - 2025

SUMMARY

Tourism plays a relatively small but important part in the local economy. Stockton's events and attractions, including the River Tees and the Barrage, are important parts of the local and Tees Valley tourism offer. The Tees Valley Combined Authority has created in the Enjoy Tees Valley brand, website and tourism promotion service. 'Enjoy Tees Valley' increases the potential reach and pull of Stockton's visitor offer and could help us attract more visitors from further afield. The development of a complementary sub-set of 'Enjoy Stockton on Tees' campaigns and packages will feed into and derive benefit from the Enjoy Tees Valley activity.

The use of the 'Enjoy' logo and branding will align Stockton's overall tourism promotions with the Tees Valley campaigns and brand, however, it is important to note that the identity and ownership of our attractions or events will not change; they will still be recognised as being owned by SBC or our partners.

To maximise the potential economic impact for Stockton Borough, we also need to link our products with the supporting tourism economy businesses, such as hotels, and seek to improve transport connectivity and product development. According to data from the STEAM economic impact assessment model, a 1% increase in Stockton's tourism economy could be worth £2.25m per annum.

There will be opportunities for further investment in tourism related activity, building on our existing expenditure, but the primary purpose of the strategy is to achieve more with the existing resources, packaging and targeting our efforts to make the whole greater than the sum of the parts.

The clearer alignment of our tourism offer, and more effective promotion of our events and cultural attractions, will also contribute to our pursuit of the UK City of Culture status for the Tees Valley in 2025.

The Strategy incorporates a Delivery Plan with a number of more detailed actions and anticipated outputs. This is expected to evolve as more partners become involved.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

If it is effective, the impact of this Tourism Economy Strategy will be highly visible and will impact (directly or indirectly) on every part of the Borough. It is important that it enjoys the endorsement and support of Cabinet. Delivery will require the alignment and coordination of the work of a number of internal departments and also our collaboration with external public, private and voluntary sector agencies. It is appropriate therefore to allow Cabinet to fully consider the potential outcomes.

In practical terms the 'Enjoy Stockton on Tees' branding will begin to become visible in our literature and on the former Rediscover Shop and it is important that this is understood to be a conscious and coordinated move.

Whilst the primary impact of the Strategy will be on our efforts to create economic prosperity, this work will also contribute to our aim of creating a Borough where our heritage, festivals, cultural activity and leisure facilities help us attract visitors and investment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Cabinet approve the Stockton on Tees Visitor Economy Strategy 2019 - 2025

DETAIL

1. The residents of the Borough know it's a great place, their visiting friends and relatives make up a big part of our existing visitor economy, but we can attract more people, from further afield, and make them stay longer. Enhancing the welcome and improving the experience of visitors to Stockton-on-Tees will affect how long they stay, how much they do, how likely they are to recommend visiting to others and how likely they are to return. Even a relatively modest increase in visitors and overnight stays will deliver a significant economic benefit.
2. Enhancing the visitor economy requires the coordinated effort of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and its partners, including private sector tourism related businesses and those promoting the wider Tees Valley destination. Enjoy Tees Valley is becoming a powerful platform and brand, helping project our visitor offer to wider audiences. The Stockton on Tees Visitor Economy Strategy sets out how we should complement the Enjoy Tees Valley investment, aligning our product to support and benefit from the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) investment without losing the identity and character of our attractions.
3. Within the Tees Valley, Stockton has a strong reputation for its events, heritage, and for the River and Barrage facilities. A lot has already been achieved and the expanding offer to visitors already provides a positive experience reflected in increasing visitor numbers.
4. To build on this success and maximise the impact and benefits of a growing visitor economy, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and its partners need a shared vision for the visitor economy, shared aims and objectives and an agreed plan of action for achieving our goals.
5. This strategy document outlines this shared vision, reflects on what has been achieved so far but also establishes new aims and objectives, outlines why these are important and explains the action needed to achieve them.

6. These aims include encouraging more visitors, stimulating investment in the local area and establishing a new profile for the visitor economy in Stockton-on-Tees.
7. The strategy is not a call for additional resources, though there may be a case for further investment. In the current economic climate, the priority is to better align existing resources; to make the whole greater than the sum of the parts by making the existing attractions, events, facilities and tourism businesses more visible and coherent.
8. The local business community along with the community and voluntary sector will have an integral role to play in the future success of the visitor economy and their views have been instrumental in forming the priorities in this plan.
9. The Stockton on Tees Visitor Economy Strategy and Delivery Plan are attached at **Appendix 1**.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

10. Adoption and implementation of the Stockton on Tees Visitor Economy Strategy has the potential to benefit all communities in the Borough. Individual projects or programmes that arise from its adoption have the potential to benefit some communities to a greater extent than others, but until such time as those specific projects or programmes are designed or proposed it is not possible to undertake a Community Impact Assessment.
11. It could be argued that those communities who identify themselves by geographies or townships within the Borough might be disadvantaged by the alignment of campaigns with a Borough-wide brand and also with the Tees Valley identity. However, the Enjoy Stockton on Tees devise will not replace or remove the identities of locations or institutions whose assets or activities are being promoted. For example, whilst Yarm as a visitor destination might be promoted through Enjoy Stockton on Tees campaigns, it would not cease to be described as Yarm.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

12. This report has no corporate parenting implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. There are no significant financial implications arising from this report. Costs associated with promotions, signage, campaigns and online activity will be covered by existing MTFP allocations.
14. Where new or additional projects or investments are recommended as a consequence of the implementation of the Stockton on Tees Visitor Economy Strategy those will be the subject of appropriate financial planning.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15. The Visitor Economy Strategy covers the use of logos, names and titles of programmes and campaigns which are subject to copyright and other restrictions. However, the Strategy is not advocating any actions that would conflict with those or any other legally binding restrictions or requirements. The Strategy encourages collaboration and alignment between independent commercial and non-commercial bodies, but it assumes that all parties being

influenced by the Strategy will nevertheless observe any relevant rights and restrictions over title or representation.

RISK ASSESSMENT

16. The adoption and implementation of the Stockton on Tees Visitor Economy Strategy is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

17. None.

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