

Local Economy Scrutiny Panel – 18th November 2008

Informal Scrutiny Group Progress Report: Tourism Strategy Review

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Purpose of the Report

The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider this matter as part of its role in

- acting as a critical friend in examining proposals for the development or review of key Council policies and programmes.
- reviewing the overall benefit to the public from services provided by the City Council and other organisations.
- organising its own work in an efficient and effective manner.

At the last meeting of this Scrutiny Panel in July it was agreed that an informal scrutiny group (ISG) be established to support officers in the review of the current tourism strategy for the District, which is approaching the end of its five year life. Cllrs Anthony, Sanders, Stephens, Love and Bell were nominated as members of the ISG.

The group has now met three times, and at its first meeting approved the proposed terms of reference as follows:

The tourism strategy informal scrutiny group will

- i) review the tourism strategy for Winchester District for 2004 – 2008 and consider its success in meeting the specified objectives, and*
- ii) guide the development of a new strategy for 2009 – 2012 to ensure that:

 - a) the opportunities of the London 2012 Games are fully exploited, and*
 - b) a sensitive balance is retained between the interests of local people, those of visitors to the district and those of the environment.**

This report summarises the ISG's progress so far and outlines the timetable leading to presentation of a new, combined strategy for the economy and tourism for approval by Cabinet in March 2008.

Links to the Corporate Strategy

The tourism strategy directly supports the corporate priority of economic prosperity by supporting and promoting tourism businesses across the district.

However, it is also an important tool in managing visitors and tourism development in a way that is sensitive to the historic townscapes and natural landscapes of the district. It therefore supports the Council's high quality environment priority.

The visitor economy supports the vibrancy of our towns and villages by bringing people and revenue to shops, eateries, arts activities, museums and other facilities that equally contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by our residents. The tourism strategy therefore also contributes to the third corporate priority of safe and strong communities.

The process of strategic planning also supports the efficient and effective Council priority in terms of offering excellent customer service, providing community leadership, working well with others and so on.

Executive Summary

During a discussion regarding the work programme for this Scrutiny Panel at its meeting in July 2008, it was proposed that an ISG be established to review the success of the tourism strategy for 2004 – 2008 and support the development of a new strategy. The intention was to return to this meeting with a full draft of the proposed strategy. However, as a result of delays imposed by both the summer break and the programme of visitor research which has been taking place in the city centre since June, the ISG is now presenting an interim report with the intention of returning with a full draft in March 2009 prior to Cabinet approval that same month.

The Group has met three times under the chairmanship of Cllr Anthony, inviting presentations from a range of expert witnesses from external stakeholder organisations and from the tourism service itself. Members have identified key issues to be addressed in the plan, and have agreed a timetable for the continued development and corporate approval process outlined in the Appendices to this report.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the contents of this report, including the proposed timetable for the completion of the new strategy.

Background Documents

None

Appendices

Appendix 1: summary of meetings and timetable for completion of the plan

Appendix 2: headline report on key findings

Appendix 3: early draft outcomes and action plan

Appendix 1: summary of meetings and timetable for completion of the plan

a) Summary of meetings to date

Meeting one: 8 September 2008

- Robert Heathcock (Head of Environment) and Alison Woods (Tourist Information Centre Manager): outlined some of the Council's range of activities supporting the visitor economy.
- Laura Hunt, Winchester Hotel and Chair of Conference Winchester: expert witness outlining current issues and performance by hotel and conferencing sector in the district.
- Sean Mannie, Royal Armouries Fort Nelson and Chair of Discover Winchester: expert witness outlining current issues and performance by attractions sector.
- Summary of progress against strategic targets.
- Findings of Audit Commission during 'value for money' review of tourism service in November 2007.

Meeting two: 29 September 2008

- Andy Hickman (Head of Access and Infrastructure) and Steve Opacic (Head of Strategic Planning) outlined further council activity with a direct impact on tourism;
- Andrew Bateman, Tourism Manager at Hampshire County Council: expert witness providing county context
- Peter Colling, Director of Development Services at Tourism South East: expert witness providing regional policy and overview of visitor trends
- Sarah Habicht, Discover Winchester Account Executive at the Saltmarsh Partnership: expert witness outlining current interests of travel media

Meeting three: 3 November 2008

- Key trends for the visitor economy, and opportunities for Winchester
- Draft outcomes and objectives for the new strategy

b) Timetable for completion and adoption of the strategy

December		Full strategy approved by Portfolio Holder Decision Notice for consultation
January)	Industry and public consultation
February)	
February 16		Meeting four <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review findings of the Winchester Visitor Survey 2008; • review early feedback from public/industry consultation • agree any changes to the strategy resulting from the above
17 March		Final report to Local Economy Scrutiny Panel
18 March		Same report to Cabinet for adoption, pending final changes in consultation with The Leader

Appendix 2: headline report on key findings of ISG

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Cultural Services Business Plan for 2008/09 sets out a target *to review and refresh strategic documents for the division*. The current tourism strategy for the district was designed to cover the five year period from 2004 to 2008 inclusive, whilst the council's economic action plan is a four year plan expiring at the end of 2009. In consultation with the Leader, who holds the Portfolio for Economy and Tourism, officers proposed to bring together the two documents into one new economic strategy for 2009 to 2013.
- 1.2 Officers considered that this would have a number of advantages, such as:
- a) a more effective use of time for both officers writing the strategy and consultees;
 - b) a reduction of the number of strategies in the division;
 - c) the consolidation of tourism as a key sector within the local economy, and
 - d) a direct fit with the economic prosperity chapter of the newly revised sustainable community strategy for the district.
- 1.3 This has meant that the ISG set up to review the current tourism strategy has also been able to have a direct influence on the emerging, combined strategy for the Winchester economy.
- 1.4 The tourism strategy was the subject of a mid-life review paper presented to the Local Economy Scrutiny Panel in November 2006, and the tourism service as a whole benefited from an informal 'value for money' review by the Audit Commission in November 2007. These findings were put before the ISG, along with progress against the nine 'SMART' (measurable) strategic targets within the strategy as at July 2008. They have been complemented by presentations from a range of 'expert witnesses' from external stakeholder organisations, who have helped to build up a picture of local, regional and national trends and issues for the sector over the coming years.

2 Key findings

- 2.1 Through the discussions of the ISG a number of key issues have emerged. Members propose that these be included in the new strategy, and highlighted in this progress report to the Panel.
- 2.1.1 *Continued relevance of current objectives*: the current strategy has three broad objectives, which relate to:
- marketing;
 - ensuring that tourism development brings benefits for local people, and
 - environmental sustainability.
- It was agreed that these would continue to be appropriate for the tourism aspects of the new, combined strategy. However, Members felt that environmental sustainability should be a 'given' across the strategy rather than a specific objective for tourism at a time when all businesses and consumers are now conscious of environmental issues.
- 2.1.2 *Usefulness of strategic targets*: the nine strategic targets, which might better be referred to as performance indicators for the strategy, measure progress in a range of quantitative methods. These range from the financial value of tourism to the local

economy and the number of visitors to the cathedral to the return on investment by the council in tourism services. Members suggested that the two most important indicators for the 'health' of the tourism sector were:

- a) the value of tourism revenue to the local economy, and
- b) the number of overnight stays in the district.

They agreed that these two measures should be the main indicators of success for tourism in the new strategy, and that the focus of marketing activity should be to drive up the number and value of overnight visits which are the only aspect of the current strategy where targets have not been met or exceeded.

- 2.1.3 *Winchester's cultural offer*: Members felt that Winchester could do more to capitalise on the strengths of its festivals and cultural events by working more closely with event organisers.
- 2.1.4 *Collective marketing resource*: with additional, Olympics-related visitors coming to London, Members proposed that Winchester should develop its joint marketing activities with other districts and operators such as South West Trains in order to make the most of modest local authority advertising budgets.
- 2.1.5 *London 2012*: the greatest potential for additional visitors is considered to be from 2013 onwards as a 'legacy' to the global media coverage for the UK in 2012. Consequently, the strategy will be for the five year period up to and including 2013, and will focus on preparing to make the most of this 'legacy visiting' by building on customer service standards, sector training, destination accessibility and international marketing reach.

3 Conclusions

- 3.1 The ISG has assisted officers in the development of the new strategy for the Winchester economy by identifying key issues and principles to underpin tourism sector performance. Whilst the results of the Winchester visitor survey and feedback from tourism businesses will be important in refining this element of the strategy, a significant amount of preparation has now been done to enable completion of the draft strategy by December.

Appendix 3: early draft outcomes and action plan

See overleaf

6 Draft Action Plan

Outcome 1: Winchester exploits its reputation as a cultural stronghold, using this as a means to stimulate a modern and creative approach to business, by

Theme	Programme	Lead	Target outputs and deadlines	Progress indicators
a) supporting the local development of knowledge-based industries	Reducing Out- Commuting <i>Objective:</i> to bring about a reduction of XX% in the total out-commute numbers for Winchester Town by the end of 2013.	Winchester City Council	i) ensure that the LDF reflects local aspirations for a knowledge-based economy across the district: specific provision to be made within core strategy by end 2009;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LDF core strategy policies
b) supporting the local development of creative industries		Winchester City Council Both universities	i) identifying premises for live-work and studio space: ii) supporting the development and work programme of the Hampshire Economic Partnership Creative Industries Task Force: ongoing; iii) co-ordination of training and development opportunities for creative practitioners in partnership with Creative Industries Business Advisory Service: min one opportunity per annum; iv) continued co-ordination of networks for creative professionals (eg Café Culture, Wired Wessex): ongoing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number of businesses participating in training, development or networking opportunities
c) facilitating diversification in the rural areas	Supporting the Rural Economy through LEADER	Winchester City Council Fieldfare	i) implement LEADER funding programme to support sustainable diversification projects in the rural areas: target 9 projects by end 2012;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number of successful new business operations in the

	<i>Objective:</i> to establish 9 new businesses in the rural areas by 2012 through effective use of LEADER funding.	Local Action Group	<p>ii) provide advice to establish new business use (eg storage, visitor accommodation) for redundant farm buildings: ongoing;</p> <p>iii)</p>	<p>rural areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • successful allocation of full LEADER grant across East Hants and Winchester • number of successful planning applications for re-use of redundant rural buildings.
d) encouraging innovative solutions to premises and transport challenges		Winchester City Council	<p>i) provide training for landowners about planning policies and processes to facilitate business planning: min one session per year from 2009;</p> <p>ii) working with MATISSE programme to encourage more flexible and tele-working to reduce congestion: ongoing;</p>	
e) marketing Winchester as a world-class tourism destination	<p><i>Welcoming the World</i></p> <p><i>Objective:</i> to increase staying visitor bed-nights by 10% by the end of 2011</p>	Winchester City Council	<p>i) draw up and deliver a comprehensive marketing strategy for the district by Jul 2009;</p> <p>ii) make creative use of e-technologies to raise awareness of Winchester: min two new e-marketing initiatives per year to meet programme objective;</p> <p>iii) develop 3 foreign language portals to reach lucrative overseas markets by end 2010;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number and value of overnight stays in the district • overall value of tourism to the district • unique visits to www.visitwinche

			<p>iv) increase accessibility (web, destination) to make the district a destination for everyone: min one initiative per year during life of this strategy;</p> <p>v) explore new and niche markets (eg equine tourism) with innovative products and presentation: min one new product introduced per annum;</p> <p>vi) build on the pilot early evening economy project, including a further scheme in summer 2009;</p>	<p>ster.co.uk</p>
	<p><i>Unparalleled Experiences</i></p> <p><i>Objective:</i> to increase total tourism turnover to the district by 20% by the end of 2012</p>	Winchester City Council	<p>i) WCC leading by example in setting the highest standards for customer care: VAQAS accreditation for museums by end 2009;</p> <p>ii) working with Tourism South East to deliver tailored, sector-based training to raise standards and skills levels: ongoing.</p> <p>iii) using 2012 as a catalyst to drive up participation in industry developments and service improvements: ongoing;</p> <p>iv) champion partners and projects offering innovative, distinctive or memorable visitor experiences (eg The English Project): ongoing;</p> <p>v) celebrating Winchester's cultural, rural and retail strengths: joined up campaign for 'city of festivals' as of 2009;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of businesses signed up to a recognized quality scheme • visitor satisfaction levels (measured by visitor survey and benchmarking) • positive media coverage (advertising equivalent) for features in the district

			<p>vi) incentivising eateries to raise their 'Safe2Eat' rating (eg free ad on tourism website): from 2010;</p> <p>vii)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no eateries in the 'unsatisfactory' rating in the Safe2East scheme
f) championing and rewarding best practice		<p>Winchester City Council</p> <p>Winchester City Centre Partnership</p>	<p>i) increasing numbers of submissions for Winchester Business Excellence Awards across the categories by XX% year on year;</p> <p>ii) increasing participation in the Hampshire Hospitality Awards by 5 businesses per annum year on year;</p> <p>iii) develop series of best practice case studies for economic development web pages, e-bulletins etc: min one per year;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number of features in Perspectives magazine and local media number of entries to Business Excellence Awards

Outcome 2: The promise of London 2012 is channelled into local opportunities to enhance the skills and ambitions of those who live in the district, by

Theme	Programme	Lead(s)	Target outputs and deadlines	Progress indicators
a) encouraging business start ups	<p><i>Encouraging Entrepreneurship</i></p> <p><i>Objective:</i> to establish a culture of entrepreneurship in the district, enabling XX business start-ups by the end of 2013.</p>	Winchester City Council; Business Link	<p>i) retain graduates through the provision of appropriate premises (eg live work, enterprise centre, studio): ongoing</p> <p>ii) establish a comprehensive advice service for those wishing to establish visitor accommodation businesses, via the Business Centre: by start 2011;</p> <p>iii) carry out visitor accommodation audit for the district to assess scope for new businesses in preparation for legacy of 2012: by end 2010;</p> <p>iv) encourage the opening of new, high quality but distinctive eateries in the district: provision of advice service via Business Centre by start 2011, and incentivisation via free marketing support by start 2011;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of business start-ups, as recorded by Business Link (NI set B1a) • number of businesses per 1000 population (NI set B1b)
b) working with schools, colleges and universities to develop the workforce of tomorrow	<p><i>Supporting Tomorrow's Workforce Today</i></p> <p><i>Objective:</i> to support local schools in rolling out successful 14-19 diplomas, leading to XX diploma graduates by the end of 2013</p>	Winchester City Council	<p>i) support student coursework by providing relevant and accurate student microsite on VisitWinchester.co.uk: by end 2009;</p> <p>ii) support student development by offering and brokering regular and effective work placements for local students: ongoing: min 5 WCC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of unique visits to new student pages on visitwinchester website

			<p>placements per year;</p> <p>iii) provide volunteers to help at enterprise events in local schools: min 4 WCC volunteers per annum;</p> <p>iv) provide employer input and advice on new university courses and emerging 14-19 diplomas: as required;</p>	
c) reducing the barriers of rural, social and digital isolation	<p><i>An Inclusive District</i></p> <p><i>Objective:</i> to reduce the index of deprivation for the district's 5 priority wards by/to ??? by the end of 2012</p>	<p>Winchester Inclusive Society Strategic Outcome Group</p> <p>Winchester City Council</p>	<p>i) commission a destination access audit for Winchester as part of preparations for 2012: audit report completed by end 2009;</p> <p>ii) promote opportunities for free/low budget 'local tourism' for local residents: promotional programme to be developed as part of new marketing strategy for the district by July 09;</p> <p>iii) provide equality of opportunity in organising and promoting special events and attractions to rural, young, old and other disadvantaged communities in the district: ongoing;</p> <p>iv) maintain a sensitive balance of print and web-based information to meet the needs of the whole community: ongoing;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local accessibility indicator (LI C3) currently under development

d) giving adults of all ages access to learning and development opportunities	<p><i>Learning for Health, Wealth and Wellbeing</i></p> <p><i>Objective:</i> to increase the number of adults (21+ years) gaining entry level skills qualifications from XX to XX by the end of 2013;</p>	Job Centre Plus	<p>i) promotion of accredited and non-accredited learning opportunities</p> <p>ii) providing routes to work for the unemployed, new parents, legal immigrants: ?what?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numbers participating in lifelong learning opportunities provided by local agencies •
	<p><i>Supporting Lifelong Learning</i></p> <p><i>Objective:</i> to ensure there is a strategic and co-ordinated approach to provision of lifelong learning and development opportunities across the district.</p>	Winchester Community Learning Forum	<p>i) gaps in the provision of lifelong learning are identified and where possible addressed.</p> <p>ii) the profile of new priorities in lifelong learning are raised.</p> <p>iii) partnership strategies are developed to pursue additional resources and funding for lifelong learning.</p> <p>iv) awareness and information on key local and national learning projects and initiatives is shared and relevant consultations responded to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Outcome 3: Businesses are good neighbours, ensuring that:

Theme	Programme	Lead	Target outputs and deadlines	Progress Indicators
a) new development provides benefits for local people	A Positive Contribution for Residents	Winchester City Council	<p>i) S106 agreements provide direct benefits (eg new community facilities, public art, local employment): ongoing;</p> <p>ii) Progress work on the Council's Small Business Concordat by:</p> <p>a) providing opportunities and training for SMEs to pitch to bigger local businesses: two training sessions per year, and annual Meet the Buyer event; and</p> <p>b) encouraging other big businesses to source supplies from local SMEs: annual Meet the Buyer event, plus reinforcement via networking and PR.</p> <p>iii) Development and successful implementation of LDF infrastructure programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens' Panel views on the impacts of tourism on the district • value of total tourism turnover retained within the local economy • number of tourism businesses serving or selling local produce or Fair Trade products • LDF annual monitoring report

<p>b) they commit to reducing harmful impacts on the local environment , and promote a low carbon economy</p>	<p>Green Achievement</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> to establish environmentally friendly business practices as the standard for the district through increased marketing and PR activity;</p>	<p>Winchester City Council</p> <p>The Sustainable Business Partnership</p> <p>Hampshire Tourism Partnership</p>	<p>i) increasing participation in the Green Leaf Tourism Scheme for the district by 10 businesses per year;</p> <p>ii) green practices championed through business excellence awards, visitor guide, industry bulletins, networking, etc: ongoing;</p> <p>iii) successful introduction of a Hants-wide car free tourism promotion with SWT by spring 2009;</p> <p>iv) developing and promoting new walking and cycling trails around the district: three new ones by 2013;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of businesses in the district in membership of The Sustainable Business Partnership • number of tourism businesses in Green Leaf scheme • number of entries for Business Excellence Award sustainable business category • number of media and other articles about green achievement
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c) they take advantage of new technologies to make services more accessible	<p>Technological Change for SMEs</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> to ensure that all small to medium enterprises in the district have access to clear, affordable training on the use of new technologies for marketing and customer access.</p>	<p>Winchester City Council</p> <p>E-Hampshire Partnership</p> <p>Tourism South East</p>	<p>i) running free 'low cost and no cost' marketing workshops for tourism businesses: min one workshop per annum;</p> <p>ii) providing 1:1 training for visitor accommodation owners to update availability on line: all accommodation updating by end 2010;</p> <p>iii) introducing MP3 or podcast tours of the city and market towns: one per year from 2009;</p> <p>iv) providing visitor information through the new WCC 'hubs': as they emerge;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of businesses taking up training places • number of tourism businesses regularly updating on line • number of businesses taking part in e-Hampshire events
	<p>Creating a competitive infrastructure for e-business</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> to put in place co-ordinated systems and communications infrastructure to facilitate effective e-business.</p>	<p>E-Hampshire</p> <p>Winchester City Council</p>	<p>i) WCC participation in Hampshire-wide 5 year action plan for increasing on-line tourism marketing effectiveness, 2009 – 2014:</p> <p>ii) introducing on-line booking to www.visitwinchester.co.uk by the end of 2009;</p> <p>iii) installing a wireless</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of actions in Hants action plan completed on time

			<p>network across Winchester town by end 2010;</p> <p>iv) commissioning a mapping project to examine Broadband connectivity across the district as a basis to tackle 'not spots': by end 2009;</p>	
d) they participate in policy and decision making, and in the wider life of the district	<p><i>A Voice for Business</i></p> <p><i>Objective:</i> to ensure that all business sectors are able to understand and fully participate planning for the future of the district</p>	<p>Winchester City Council</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce</p> <p>Winchester City Centre Partnership</p>	<p>i) re-introducing regular tourism sector e-bulletins: from Jan 09;</p> <p>ii) supporting and developing the Economic Prosperity Strategic Outcome Group: ongoing;</p> <p>iii) ensuring that tourism issues are addressed by the SOG: ongoing;</p> <p>iv) identifying new and creative ways of engaging with businesses: ongoing.</p> <p>v) establishing a business network for Denmead: by end 2009.</p> <p>vi) co-ordinating business response to emerging plans for the South Downs National Park: ongoing;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feedback from businesses on e-bulletins • number of businesses on NHCCI contact database, plus local membership

			vii) district-wide business survey programme developed by end 2010;	
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