

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Thursday, 9 April 2009

at 2.00 pm

in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

MEMBERS: REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors R W Cook, S Cook, Gibbon, London, A Marshall, Morris, Richardson, Wright and Young.

Resident Representatives: John Lynch, Brian McBean and Iris Ryder

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2009

4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM

No items

5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

No items

6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

No items

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Scrutiny Investigation into the Marketing of Hartlepool

- 7.1 Draft Final Report into the Marketing of Hartlepool – *Chair of Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum*

8. ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

6 March 2009

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Councillor Shaun Cook (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Steve Gibbon, Frances London, Ann Marshall, Dr Morris, Carl Richardson and David Young

Resident Representatives:

John Lynch and Brian McBean

Officers: Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services
Stuart Green, Assistant Director, Planning and Economic Development
Alison Mawson, Head of Community Safety and Prevention
Jeff Mason, Head of Support Services
James Walsh, Scrutiny Support Officer
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

95. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Edna Wright.

96. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

97. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2009

Confirmed subject to the addition of Councillor Rob Cook's apologies and the attendance of Councillor Jonathan Brash.

98. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Minute 91 – In response to a Member's request for an update on a response relating to the redeployment process, the Scrutiny Support Officer advised Members that they would shortly be receiving a letter confirming the current

position regarding job vacancies .

Minute 92 – A Member queried whether a letter had been sent to the Mayor in relation to concerns expressed by Members regarding the issue of advertising costs on roundabouts. In response to the Scrutiny Support Officer's request for clarification as to whether these concerns were to be dealt with by way of a recommendation at the end of the investigation or via a letter to the Mayor, it was suggested that both of these options be pursued.

Minute 92 - With regard to the transport interchange, the Assistant Director agreed to provide an update on progress to date under separate cover.

99. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum

None.

100. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

None

101. Corporate Plan Update for 2009/10: Proposed Outcomes and Actions *(Scrutiny Support Officer/Director of Regeneration and Planning Services)*

The Corporate Plan covered 2009/10 to 2010/11 which coincided with the Local Area Agreement and the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review. It was noted that as in previous years, the Corporate Plan would be considered by each Scrutiny Forum early in March, reported back to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 20 March 2009 and used to formulate the formal Scrutiny response to Cabinet in April.

The Director of Regeneration and Planning Services provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which provided Members with the opportunity to consider the proposed outcomes and actions for inclusion in the Corporate Plan 2009/10 and 2010/11. A number of achievements were highlighted which included:-

- Community Strategy reviewed
- New Local Area Agreement in place and Multi Area Agreement
- Reduced Crime
- Selective Licensing Scheme Approved
- Further resources agreed for Housing Market Renewal Programme
- Number of Affordable Housing Schemes approved

The presentation included details of areas to target, challenges as well as future proposals.

A discussion ensued in which the following issues were raised:

- Following a Member's request for clarification, proposals in relation to future housing schemes were outlined.
- In response to a request for information relating to the make-up of the new Housing Task Group and a request for assurances that the Task Group was not a duplication of the Partnership Housing Group, the Director of Regeneration and Planning Services advised that it was envisaged that the Group would initially comprise the relevant Portfolio Holder and appropriate partners. The purpose of the Group was to take forward new initiatives.
- With regard to empty property intervention, a Member queried what progress had been made in relation to the Jacksons Landing site and the Odeon building. Members were advised that there had been interest in both sites, however, potential developers and the current owners had been unable to reach agreement on the value of the properties.
- Concerns were expressed regarding vandalism problems on derelict sites and the costs incurred by the taxpayer in terms of higher Council Tax precepts as a result of the increased pressures placed on the police and fire service in dealing with such issues. A query was raised regarding the powers available to the Council to enforce owners to maintain derelict buildings. Following the Assistant Director's response that the powers available to the Council were limited, a further discussion ensued on the limited powers to address this issue which included compulsory purchase, planning law and public health and safety legislation.
- During discussions relating to the priorities of the town and a query regarding the grant scheme claw back arrangements, the Assistant Director provided details of the conditions of grant schemes and claw back arrangements and highlighted some of the measures that had been introduced in an attempt to address this issue.

Recommendation

- (i) That the proposed outcomes and actions for inclusion in the 2009/10 Corporate Plan as attached at Appendix A, be supported.
- (ii) That the comments of the Forum, as outlined above, be presented to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 20 March 2009

102. Scrutiny Investigation into the Marketing of Hartlepool - Feedback from Site Visit to South Tyneside Council (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

As part of the scrutiny investigation into the marketing of Hartlepool evidence gathering process, the Chair and Members of the Forum had visited South Tyneside Council the previous day, the findings of which were outlined in the notes circulated to Members at the meeting. The findings from the visit together with comments of the Forum included:-

- In the event of a future visit a Member suggested views be shared with Elected Members from the host authority.
- Main tourist attractions were the coastline, sandy beaches, parks, South Shields Museum and Art Gallery, Arbeia Roman Fort and Customs House, guided walks and organised activities for pensioners. Members acknowledged the substantial investment in the area.
- South Tyneside's annual marketing budget of £90,000 per annum, £25,000 of which was spent on advertising campaigns/literature which was significantly higher than Hartlepool's current budget of £15,000.
- Advertising Campaigns – local adverts in Northern Echo and Evening Gazette as well as encouraging overnight visitors through press in Yorkshire and Scotland.
- Glossy marketing material, events programme to attract visitors throughout the year. What's On Guide – produced and funded by the Council and Customs House. Events included South Tyneside Summer Festival, International Magic Festival, Sunday Concerts, Heritage Open Days and North of Tyne Event.
- 5 million tourists visited South Tyneside each year which included Great North Run visitors.

Recommendation

That the observations from the site visit, be noted and be used to assist with the scrutiny investigation.

103. Issues Identified from Forward Plan

None

104. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was reported that the next meeting would be held at 2.00 pm on 9 April 2009 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 3.20 pm.

CHAIRMAN

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

9 April 2009



Report of: **Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny
Forum**

Subject: **DRAFT FINAL REPORT – THE MARKETING OF
HARTLEPOOL**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into 'The Marketing of Hartlepool'.

2. SETTING THE SCENE

- 2.1 At the meeting of this Forum on 19 June 2008 Members determined their Work Programme for the 2008/09 Municipal Year. The topic of 'The Marketing of Hartlepool' was agreed to form a major in-depth Scrutiny Inquiry for the Forum's 2008/09 Work Programme.
- 2.2 Responsibility for the marketing and promotion of Hartlepool falls under the remit of the Economic Development Section which is part of the Regeneration and Planning Services Department of the Council.
- 2.3 Marketing and promotion are generally aimed at two particular audiences:
- (i) potential visitors; and
 - (ii) potential business investors interested in developing and / or establishing businesses.
- 2.4 With respect to the visitor market, STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) provides local authorities with the best evidence of the overall impact that visitors can make to a local economy as shown overleaf in Table1:-

Table 1: STEAM Statistics for Hartlepool

	1997	2003	2005*
Economic Impact	£22,839,000	£30,198,000	£43,647,000
Accommodation	£1,137,000	£2,171,000	£2,685,000
Food and Drink	£5,221,000	£6,599,000	£13,685,000
Recreation	£2,871,000	£3,683,000	£2,646,000
Shopping	£3,505,000	£4,355,000	£4,518,000
Transport	£552,000	£695,000	£1,800,000
Indirect Expenditure and VAT	£9,552,000	£12,694,000	£18,313,000

* Figures are currently draft

- 2.5 The Tall Ships' Races provides a particular marketing / promotional opportunity. For the first time from 7-10 August 2010 the Tall Ships' Races will be hosted by Hartlepool. It is estimated that over 1 million people¹ visited Liverpool during the weekend of 18-21 July 2008 to see the Tall Ships' Races injecting £30 million¹ into the local economy. As Hartlepool's Mayor said, the arrival of the Tall Ships' Races in 2010 gives Hartlepool a "tremendous opportunity to showcase the town"²

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 To gain an understanding of how Hartlepool is marketed in terms of tourism and business and identify ways of further raising the profile of the Town.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 The following Terms of Reference for the investigation were agreed by the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 4 September 2009:-
- (a) To gain an understanding of the role and responsibility that Hartlepool Borough Council has towards the marketing of Hartlepool to attract visitors and encourage businesses to the town;
 - (b) To review the role of Hartlepool at a local, sub-regional and regional basis in relation to its profile and ensuring that at each level the requirements of the Town are being represented;
 - (c) To examine the marketing and promotion of Tall Ships 2010 and ensure that the Town continues to benefit from the exposure post-2010;
 - (d) To identify key partner bodies who engage and are responsible for helping to raise the profile of Hartlepool as a place to work and visit; and

¹ Liverpool Daily Post, 22 July 2008

² Hartlepool Borough Council, 28 June 2008

- (e) To examine the changes in the provision of information used in the marketing to new businesses and visitors in light of the development of information technology.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

- 5.1 The membership of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum for the 2008/09 Municipal Year was as detailed below:-

Councillors R Cook, S Cook (Chair), Gibbon, London, A Marshall, Morris, Richardson, Wright (Vice Chair), and Young

Resident Representatives:

John Lynch, Brian McBean and Iris Ryder

6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

- 6.1 Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum met formally from 4 September 2008 to 9 April 2009 to discuss and receive evidence relating to this investigation. A detailed record of the issues raised during these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services.

- 6.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-

- (a) Detailed presentations and reports from Hartlepool Borough Council Officers which was enhanced with verbal evidence;
- (b) Verbal evidence from the Authority's Elected Mayor in his role as Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Liveability;
- (c) Verbal evidence from the Authority's Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism;
- (d) Verbal Evidence from key partners from Middleton Grange Shopping Centre, Cream Restaurants, York House Hotel, Tees Valley Regeneration and the HMS Trincomalee Trust; and
- (e) Site visit by Members to South Tyneside Council to examine another local authority's marketing strategy.

FINDINGS

7. HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN MARKETING THE TOWN TO TOURISTS AND BUSINESSES

- 7.1 On the 3 October Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum received detailed evidence from officers from the Regeneration and Planning Services Department into the role and responsibility that Hartlepool Borough Council has towards the marketing of the Town to tourists and businesses. Members learnt that the marketing activity is aimed at three distinct audiences and promoted in different ways as detailed below:-

Marketing to Potential Visitors

- 7.2 Potential Visitors can be classified as three groups, those people who are either the traditional tourist coming on a day visit or overnight stay to visit the attractions or facilities that Hartlepool has to offer, business and the contract market who are either staying or visiting the Town.
- 7.3 Members noted that in order to attract the leisure visitor, it was important that the Council promoted the attractions that Hartlepool had to offer. With its coastal outlook Hartlepool's attractions are focussed on the Marina, the Maritime Experience (including the HMS Trincomalee and the PS Wingfield Castle) and Seaton Carew beach, however, the historical nature of the Headland also drew people to the area as did the variety of eating establishments in Hartlepool, the Town Hall Theatre, the Heugh Battery, the Town's connection to the cartoon strip character Andy Capp and Hartlepool's military and religious history.
- 7.4 Business and contract workers were slightly different in that they were often drawn into the area due to circumstances surrounding their work. Members recognised that business and contract workers may well be influenced to return to Hartlepool due to the range of visitor facilities that draw the traditional tourist, however, visitor accommodation was an important commodity to these two groups as was the provision of shops and restaurants.
- 7.5 In order to attract potential visitors to Hartlepool, Members learnt that the Council's Regeneration and Planning Services Department had a dedicated Tourism Team, comprising of two members of staff, who utilised various marketing tools as detailed below:-
- (i) Managing the www.destinationhartlepool.com website;
 - (ii) Production of the Hartlepool Mini Guide;
 - (ii) Production of the Eat in Hartlepool guide;

- (iv) Production of the Hartlepool Town Map;
- (v) Support for individual marketing projects, such as the Maritime Festival;
- (vi) Promotion of the Redcar, Saltburn & Hartlepool Golf Week;
- (vii) Production of an annual newsletter to businesses;
- (viii) Managing the three network groups (Passport, Hotels and Restaurants); which involve the key providers across Hartlepool and provide these providers with information to support their business and encouraging them to engage with each other; and
- (ix) Input to Tees Valley wide marketing activity and support the North East Tourism Network.

Members were interested that the annual cost of promoting Hartlepool to potential visitors totalled £21,012 during 2007/08, although Members were pleased that this budget had been increased through advertisements and sponsorship by local businesses.

Marketing to Potential Property Investors and Developers

- 7.6 Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum were acutely aware that potential property investors and developers were an important group of people who were vital in further developing Hartlepool for both manufacturing and service sector employers. This audience was drawn to Hartlepool by what property was currently available in the Town, the value of property and the level of service availability. The example of Queens Meadow was acknowledged by Members to be an excellent project that had drawn investors and developers into Hartlepool.
- 7.7 Members were informed that this area of marketing was very much a partnership approach by Hartlepool Borough Council and Tees Valley Regeneration (TVR). TVR maintained an up to date business directory that Hartlepool Borough Council could use when target marketing specific investors or developers via e-marketing, direct mail campaigns and property or development exhibitions. The Forum was particularly impressed by the Queens Meadow brochure produced through this partnership relationship.

Marketing to Potential Incoming Businesses

- 7.8 The audience of potential incoming businesses was reflective of the influences that drew property investors and developers to Hartlepool, but they had additional interests relating to the labour market available in Hartlepool, supply chain accessibility and the availability of appropriate accommodation to house both their workers and their potential management.

- 7.9 As with the potential investors and developers, the Forum noted that a partnership approach with TVR was necessary for Hartlepool to achieve fully its goal of attracting incoming businesses to the Town. When and where specific sites or property offers became available, these were emailed to a list of over 10,000 clients on a quarterly basis, however, for international business attraction this was handled by the Invest in Britain Bureau through One North East (ONE) and TVR.
- 7.10 With the closure of a number of high street stores such as Woolworths, Greenwoods and Adams there was concern amongst Members about the number of empty units in the Middleton Grange Shopping Centre. Members were advised at their meeting on 20 February 2009 that marketing activity was a commercial consideration between operators and traders, but that officers did liaise with the shopping centre management over measures to seek to support the centre. Discussions had taken place on how to encourage more shoppers and it had recently been agreed that car parking charges would be lifted at certain times of the day.

Evidence from the Authority's Elected Mayor

- 7.11 At the meeting of the Forum of 3 October 2008, the Mayor provided Members with his evidence as both Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning. The Mayor highlighted his concerns over the marketing budget that had been 'salami sliced' through the years and that marketing of Hartlepool's attractions and visitor facilities was vitally important in encouraging visitors and ensuring investment in the businesses in Hartlepool, leading to a more prosperous Town. The Mayor surprised Members when he revealed that survey work indicated that 70% of Hartlepudlians had not visited Hartlepool's Maritime Experience.

8. ENSURING THE REQUIREMENTS OF HARTLEPOOL ARE REPRESENTED THROUGH ITS PROFILE AT A LOCAL, SUB-REGIONAL AND REGIONAL BASIS

- 8.1 Members had already noted in evidence on attracting businesses and investors to Hartlepool that at times a partnership approach was required and this meant Hartlepool engaging at a Tees Valley level, however, there were also circumstances that gave Hartlepool a role to play at a North East regional level. Members of the Forum were keen to learn more about how Hartlepool was positioned to market itself within these differing level and the evidence gathered is as follows:-

Marketing to Potential Visitors

- 8.2 At the meeting of the Forum on 3 October 2008, Members were heard evidence on how potential visitors were drawn into Hartlepool at a local level as detailed in sections 7.2-7.5, however, in addition to this potential visitors were also attracted to Hartlepool in its role that it played at a sub-regional and regional basis.

- 8.3 At a sub-regional basis potential visitors were drawn to the Tees Valley region through the work of the Area Tourism Partnership (ATP) known collectively as visitTeesvalley. This enabled all authorities within the Tees Valley region to work collectively together to attract potential visitors to the sub-region and ensure that the highlights of each town are broadcast to all visitors. Members were encouraged that this was the most effective and efficient use of the budgetary resources of the Tourism Team and enabled Hartlepool to be have a profile represented by visitTeesvalley that worked at a much higher level than would have been achievable through the current resources at the Team's disposal. In working through visitTeesvalley, Hartlepool Borough Council's Tourism Team's activity has targeted markets which could not have been reached effectively within their current budgets.
- 8.4 It was noted by Members of the Forum that the lack of accommodation in the Town was something that discouraged overnight visitors so, therefore, it was important to ensure that Hartlepool was networked at a Tees Valley level so it could tap into the broader range of accommodation in its neighbouring local authorities.
- 8.5 The cost of TV and Newspaper advertising was recognised by Members of the Forum at their meeting of 3 October 2008 as being an extremely costly method of marketing Hartlepool. Although visitTeesvalley had some influence in this arena, it was the work carried out by ONE that gave Hartlepool a national and international voice in attracting potential visitors. The 'Passionate People Passionate Places' TV advertising campaign, run since 2005 by ONE, has included Hartlepool as part of a wider campaign to attract visitors to the North East region as a whole.

Marketing to Potential Property Investors and Developers

- 8.6 Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum acknowledged that they had already received evidence on the key role that TVR played alongside Hartlepool Borough Council in attracting potential property investors and developers into Hartlepool as detailed in sections 7.6-7.7. At their meeting of the 3 October 2008, Members were learnt that when a property investor or developer logs an interest in being sited in Hartlepool, a joint meeting is arranged between TVR and Hartlepool Borough Council. With the involvement of TVR, potential investors and developers can be offered bespoke solutions to their needs as well as offers of help for grant applications.
- 8.7 At their meeting of the 2 February 2009, Members were concerned about Hartlepool's peripheral position in comparison with many other parts of the Tees Valley and the importance of marketing Hartlepool individually to assist with economic issues, however, the Forum was reassured by the Head of Business Investment from TVR, that the focus of TVR was to promote the area as a whole and to encourage businesses to set up in the area.

Marketing to Potential Incoming Businesses

- 8.8 Sections 7.8-7.9 detail the evidence gathered by the Regeneration and Planning Services Forum into not only the profile of Hartlepool at a North East regional level, but also the need for it to have a profile at an international level. However, when the Forum met on the 2 February 2009, Members queried why the marketing of Hartlepool to incoming businesses was handled by ONE and not Hartlepool Borough Council. The Assistant Director, Planning and Economic Development advised Members that the current mechanism worked well and there were many difficulties in accessing worldwide markets, not least the current budget provision which did not lend itself to solo marketing from the Authority.
- 8.9 The Head of Business Investment (TVR) indicated to Members on the 2 February 2009 that the role of TVR was to ensure that information for the Tees Valley as a whole was provided to potential developers and there was no emphasis on any particular location. The aim was to attract investment to the Tees Valley in the first instance and then offer the best property options in light of the needs of the particular enquiry.
- 8.10 Members questioned the Head of Business Investment (TVR) at their meeting of the 2 February 2009 about the types of skills data available for the area. The Forum was advised that skills data was available to national and international markets on a sector basis, for example the process and chemical industry labour supply offer.

Visit to South Tyneside Council

- 8.11 On 5 March 2009, Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum visited South Tyneside Council to gather evidence about how a local authority similar in its amenities and size ensured that it marketed its assets in an effective and efficient manner. South Tyneside has a population of roughly 150,000 people and covers the areas of Hebburn, Jarrow, Boldon, Whitburn and its administrative centre in South Shields. The evidence gathered by Members who undertook the visit is detailed as follows:-
- (i) That 5 million tourists (STEAM research) visit South Tyneside each year, which includes those who stop in the area when the Great North Run occurs. Members were interested to learn that the Great North Run also has a positive impact on accommodation providers in Hartlepool;
 - (ii) Similarities exist between the two Towns, in that the majority of visitors (95%) to South Shields were day trippers and the aim of the Council is to convert these day trippers into overnight stays. The problem that both Towns' share is the small number and range of accommodation provision which is available to potential visitors, although the current number does meet current needs;

- (iii) The marketing budget for South Tyneside is £90,000 per year, with £25,000 being spent on advertising campaigns. Although Hartlepool's figure is only £15,000 per year with £9,000 spent on printed materials supplemented through income generation of £3,000, it was noted by Members that Hartlepool had a smaller population, smaller overall Council budget and that despite a higher budget businesses in Hartlepool have better one-to-one contact with officers; and
- (iv) Members also compared the roles and positions of Hartlepool within their respective ATPs, recognising that Hartlepool is prominently featured within the Tees Valley ATP's work.

9. MARKETING AND PROMOTING THE TALL SHIPS' RACES 2010

- 9.1 Members in choosing the topic of the Marketing of Hartlepool had stressed the importance of ensuring that Hartlepool was making the most of the assets that it had to offer to potential visitors. In ensuring that Hartlepool was marketed appropriately and best represented the needs of the Town, so it would be ideally placed to tap into the potential bonanza of new visitors drawn to Hartlepool by The Tall Ships' Races in 2010. Members felt that it was important that new visitors drawn in by The Tall Ships' Races were encouraged to return and seek out other places of interest that Hartlepool had to offer. In order to focus on such a momentous event for Hartlepool, Members dedicated their meeting of the 31 October 2008 to gather evidence on the promotion and marketing of the Tall Ships Races' 2010. The evidence gathered from the 31 October 2008 meeting is detailed below:-
- 9.2 Members were informed that visitTeesvalley were chairing the Marketing and Communications Workstream for The Tall Ships Races and that representatives of visitTeesvalley had been given a specific presentation highlighting the areas of interest that The Tall Ships' Races would bring to the Tees Valley and Hartlepool in particular. To ensure that Hartlepool was prepared in relation to the marketing of the event to potential visitors, captains and crew, links had been built and good practice shared with past and future host ports in Aalborg, Antwerp, Kristiansand, Belfast, Liverpool, Newcastle and Gateshead.
- 9.3 Members were pleased to learn that a number of marketing and promotional activities had already taken place, although the Forum accepted that this would increase once the calendar year moved onto 2009 and the Council's PR Team was complemented with an officer dedicated for the PR of the Tall Ships' Races 2010. Details of the marketing and promotional activities undertaken or planned were detailed to Members as follows:-
 - (i) Production of a distinct event brand;
 - (ii) Key businesses using event branding;
 - (iii) www.hartlepooltallships2010 website launched;

- (iv) Promotional letterhead templates to be produced;
 - (v) Using current marketing materials to promote the event in a cost effective manner; and
 - (vi) Future production of an e-newsletter.
- 9.4 In addition to the planned activities under section 9.3, Members suggested additional marketing proposals including the following:-
- (i) Turn the map promoting vantage points and car parking into disposable restaurant place mats;
 - (ii) Utilisation of the event graphic / logo on all Council stationery and emails; and
 - (iii) The signposting of attendees to the races of the other attractions in the Town.
- 9.5 Although excited by the event, Members of the Forum were keen to ensure that The Tall Ships' Races resulted in repeat visitors. The Assistant Director, Planning and Economic Development reassured Members that visitors to the event would have their data captured to encourage them to revisit Hartlepool at a later date. The Public Relations Manager informed Members that local train operators had been approached to carry leaflets detailing what Hartlepool has to offer in addition to The Tall Ships' Races before, during and after the event.
- 9.6 The Assistant Director, Planning and Economic Development indicated to Members that a Council budget had been specifically earmarked for the event that could be drawn from to market the event. The Forum were also informed that additional funding was being sought from ONE, along with other external funders, potential sponsorship opportunities and in-kind contributions.
- 10. KEY PARTNERS WHO ENGAGE WITH HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE TOWN**
- 10.1 At their meeting of 3 October 2008, Members had heard from the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism who had highlighted one of the key partners in raising the profile of the Town, as being the people who lived in Hartlepool. The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism informed Members of a recent encounter with some Australian tourists visiting the town who had made very encouraging remarks about Hartlepool. However, the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism highlighted the importance of residents taking responsibility for their Town in not only ensuring that littering didn't become a problem, but that they assist in the promotion of the excellent facilities that the town had to offer

- 10.2 Broader than the public of Hartlepool, the success of the marketing of Hartlepool often involved key partners such as ONE, TVR and visitTeesvalley. However at the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum meeting of 3 October 2008, Members were informed by the Principal Economic Development Officer (Tourism) that three key network groups existed in the Town to help market Hartlepool as a visitor destination and significant support from businesses was key to this approach as highlighted below:-
- (i) Passport Group;
Set up to look at the overall strategic tourist activities that can benefit local businesses.
 - (ii) Hotels Group;
Involving the accommodation providers in Hartlepool, the Hotels Group have developed a tourism map, email loop service, visitor survey and facilities sheets.
 - (iii) Restaurant Group.
Involves some of the restaurants in Hartlepool and has been instrumental in the development of the Eat Guide, as well as co-ordinating Taste Events with Hartlepool College.
- 10.2 Members felt that it was important to hear from these key partners and when the Forum met on the 2 February 2009 a number of key business representatives were invited to provide their evidence as detailed below:-

Evidence from Cream Restaurants Ltd

- 10.3 The Managing Director, Cream Restaurants Ltd reported to Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum that as a visitTeesvalley Board Member he was fully aware of the marketing activities in the town and throughout the Tees Valley. The efforts by the Economic Development Team to promote the Passport Group and Hartlepool were widely recognised. The improvements in the town were something to be proud of and the value of these improvements in terms of marketing were emphasised. However, it was acknowledged that there were further improvements that could be made and that businesses had an important part to play in relation to the quality of the visitor experience which they provide.
- 10.4 The thoughts of Members were inspired when the Managing Director stressed the view that tourists visiting family or friends were an invaluable form of marketing and were likely to promote and share their experiences of the town. The issue of public perception was a major factor in terms of marketing the town. The Forum recognised that the businesses played a part in the visitor experience and it was important that they provided the right quality of experience in order to encourage repeat and new visitors. An increase in visitor numbers could not be left solely to the role of a marketing activity.

Evidence from Middleton Grange Shopping Centre

- 10.5 As a key partner and focal point of the Town centre, the Centre Manager endorsed the comments made by the Managing Director from Cream Restaurants (section 10.4) in relation to the fantastic efforts of the Council's Economic Development Team. The Town Centre Manager informed Members that the marketing material produced by the Authority was extremely good, but the rationale behind a repeat visit was reflected more in the experience the visitor had once they were in the Town. It was considered that the marketing material was good and pointed out that marketing was very much about people's experiences when visiting the town.

Evidence from HMS Trincomalee Trust

- 10.6 The General Manager from the HMS Trincomalee Trust informed the Forum that as a Board Member of visitTeesvalley there were some issues in relation to marketing that were as a result of funding. The advantages of the Passport Group and the valid contribution of the local authority which enabled contributors from the business, voluntary and public sectors to come together were invaluable, but the importance of promoting the right image for visitors with good signage and no litter problems were highlighted as well as the need to promote localised awareness of what the town has to offer.

Evidence from York House Hotel

- 10.7 The General Manager from the York Hotel commented on the excellent amenities the town had to offer and the importance of promoting localised awareness to encourage residents to explore their local environment rather than travel to other areas.

11. THE CHANGES IN THE PROVISION OF MARKETING INFORMATION

- 11.1 When the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum met on the 3 October 2008, Members received information on the current methods of marketing Hartlepool. There had been major changes to the way marketing material had been produced, with an emphasis away from the printed media into electronic methods of marketing. Members were interested to learn that the level of budget required for a marketing campaign was very much dependent on the subject matter and media used for different marketing campaigns.
- 11.2 The Principal Economic Development Officer (Tourism) highlighted to Members at their meeting of 3 October 2008 that the destinationhartlepool website was a dual site that housed information for both visitors and businesses. Rather than confusing the message to both distinct audiences, the site allowed a choice of whether to examine opportunities for leisure or business and follow those choices through into sub-sites. This enabled the Team to manage one website and promote both sub-sites at the same time.

- 11.3 The Forum also heard evidence about the vital role played by the regional Destination Management System (DMS), called [desti.ne](#), which populates all the key tourism websites both locally and nationally, allowing businesses to be visible to a global audience. The DMS has also provided opportunities for businesses in Hartlepool to include online bookability through a service called [frontdesk](#), promotion on nationally recognised websites such as [lastminute.com](#) and [expedia.com](#), the management of their own business information online and the opportunity to tap into key marketing opportunities across the region.

12. CONCLUSIONS

- 12.1 The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum concluded:-
- (a) That the support provided by officers to the businesses in Hartlepool is greatly welcomed by those businesses in the Town;
 - (b) That the marketing budget whilst not being well resourced, is utilised to its fullest potential;
 - (c) That businesses can and are working in partnership to market Hartlepool;
 - (d) That The Tall Ships' Races 2010 gives Hartlepool the opportunity to attract a sizeable increase in visitor numbers in the long-term;
 - (e) That Hartlepool's places of interest are not well known enough both externally and within the Town;
 - (f) That the current transport system in Hartlepool does not encourage visitors into the Town, particularly through the delays in the development of the Hartlepool Transport Interchange;
 - (g) That unique selling points, such as the newly authorised horse drawn carriages, should be encouraged to enhance the experience of visiting Hartlepool;
 - (h) That Hartlepool and the Tees Valley as a whole has an external perception that is discouraging visitors from coming into the area, although Members agreed that there had been many improvements in both the product and general awareness and perceptions of the business and visitor market;
 - (i) That the geographical position of Hartlepool as not being a major thoroughfare to other larger cities and visitor attractions, does not help encourage passing visitors; and

- (j) That signage into and around the Town does not help direct visitors towards attractions.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from a wide range of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Forum's key recommendations to the Cabinet are as outlined below:-

- (a) That the residents and businesses of Hartlepool be encouraged to celebrate the visitor and business attractions that Hartlepool has to offer;
- (b) That the destinationhartlepool website should feature video footage of the visitors attractions in Hartlepool;
- (b) That residents within Tees Valley be encouraged to visit Hartlepool and that tourism officers from the region are given a guided tour of the attractions that Hartlepool has to offer;
- (c) That the signage into and around Hartlepool be:-
 - (i) Reviewed, with particular reference to interpretation signage; and
 - (ii) Re-examined in relation to the decision to use an intermediary company who charges for advertisements on roundabouts in Hartlepool.
- (d) That there be continued encouragement and incentives for new businesses to settle in the Town on existing sites and where these sites no longer meet the incoming needs, new business sites be developed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Liveability;

Councillor Victor Tumility – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism;

Stuart Green – Assistant Director, Planning and Economic Development;

Antony Steinberg – Economic Development Manager;

Jo Cole – Principal Economic Development Officer (Tourism);

John Mennear – Assistant Director, Adult and Community Services;

Michelle Daurat – Tall Ships Project Manager;

Alastair Rae – Public Relations Manager.

External Representatives:

Krimo Bouabda – Managing Director, Cream Restaurants Ltd;

Bryn Hughes – General Manager, HMS Trincomalee Trust;

John Leer – Head of Business Investment, Tees Valley Regeneration;

Daniel Raudin – General Manager, York House Hotel;

Mark Rycraft – Centre Manager, Middleton Grange Shopping Centre;

Gillian Quinn – Assistant Tourism Officer, South Tyneside Council.

**COUNCILLOR SHAUN COOK
CHAIR OF THE REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY
FORUM**

April 2009

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:-

- (a) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into the Marketing of Hartlepool – Scoping Report' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum of 4 September 2008.
- (b) Report of the Director of Regeneration and Planning Services entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into the Marketing of Hartlepool: Setting the Scene'

presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum of 3 October 2008.

- (c) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into the Marketing of Hartlepool – Evidence from the Authority's Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Liveability and Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism – Covering Report' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum of 3 October 2008.
- (d) Report of the Director of Regeneration and Planning Services entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into the Marketing of Hartlepool: The Tall Ship[s] Races 2010' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum of 31 October 2008.
- (e) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into the Marketing of Hartlepool – Evidence from Key Partners – Covering Report' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum of 20 February 2009.
- (f) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into the Marketing of Hartlepool: Feedback from Site Visit – Covering Report' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum of 6 March 2009.
- (g) Minutes of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum of 4 September 2008, 3 October 2008, 31 October 2008, 20 February 2009 and 6 March 2009.