

JOINT CULTURE, LEISURE & TOURISM AND REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & SKILLS PORTFOLIOS DECISION RECORD 28 NOVEMBER 2011

The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillors Cath Hill (Culture, Leisure & Tourism Portfolio Holder); and
Peter Jackson (Regeneration, Economic Development & Skills
Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning
Antony Steinberg, Economic Development Manager
David Worthington, Cultural Services Manager
Jo Cole, Tourism Officer
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

1. Tourism Business Support (*Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning*)

Type of decision

None – the report was for the Portfolio Holders information only.

Purpose of report

To provide a progress report on the background to and context of the delivery of tourism in Hartlepool and the North East. The report informs of the progress of support that the Council has made to the tourism economy in Hartlepool and seeks comments and endorsements of this support.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Tourism Officer reported that the visitor economy had a significant role in the overall economy of Hartlepool, with STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) research estimating the value of the visitor economy to Hartlepool in 2009 (draft) at £118m, supporting 2000 jobs and attracting 3 million visitors.

The last six months had seen a significant change in support provided to this sector, with the loss of the North East Tourism Network (led by ONE NorthEast) and the Area Tourism Partnership, visitTeesvalley. Both agencies supported the industry with a multi million pound budget, through research, product development, bespoke skills support, funding and through national and regional marketing and PR campaigns.

In light of these changes, the local authority key priorities were identified to support the tourism businesses in Hartlepool

- 1) To inform businesses of the current changes and implications and provide advice and guidance on these changes.
- 2) To deliver two key campaigns to promote Hartlepool as a visitor location
- 3) To deliver and enhance the current destinationhartlepool.com
- 4) To engage with other departments to look at how to deliver joined up marketing activity
- 5) To look at alternative and new opportunities for joint working outside the traditional 'Tees Valley' boundary
- 6) To continue the work of the two key networking groups – Passport and Hotels Group
- 7) To increase income generation on projects
- 8) To deliver bespoke tourism training and workforce development
- 9) To continue to work with Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council on the annual Redcar, Saltburn and Hartlepool Golf Week.

The Tourism Officer then went on to highlight the progress made on the key priorities which included: -

- The Eat Campaign guide which was now in its seventh year and included 33 businesses, almost double the number at the start of the campaign.
- The What's Happening Hartlepool publication which would replace the Hartlepool Mini Guide and the What's On publications.
- The development of the Destinationhartlepool.com website (in partnership with Middlesbrough Council) and the increasing use of social media as a marketing tool.
- The development of partnerships with Discover Durham and Visit County Durham to raise the profile of Hartlepool as a visitor destination.
- The continuation of partner work through the Attractions Forum and Venue Managers Forum that were developed under visitTeesValley.
- The work of the Networks and Business Engagement – The Passport Group and Hotels Group.
- The continued development of bespoke training.
- The success of the 2011 Redcar-Saltburn-Hartlepool Golf Week in partnership with Redcar and Cleveland Council.

The Portfolio Holders welcomed the report and the extensive work being undertaken by officers to continue to promote the tourism potential of Hartlepool. The Portfolio Holders supported the partnership working that was being developed with neighbouring authorities.

The use of social media to promote Hartlepool was also discussed and welcomed by the Portfolio Holders as an extremely cost effective way of promoting the attractions and events in Hartlepool particularly with a 'younger' audience. It was noted, however, that the traditional promotional

tools such as printed guides had also proved to be very successful, with supplies of the most recent Hartlepool Mini Guide print run having run out.

Portfolio Holders did feel that the destinationHartlepool.com website did need much more promotion and welcomed comments from officers in relation to a re-launch of the website. The revised website (which has been developed in light of the changes within the regional structure will have stronger links to the Council's own website.

Officers were congratulated on the work that had been undertaken to alleviate the effects of the ending of wider regional tourism marketing and maintain and promote Hartlepool's reputation.

Decision

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 10.05 a.m.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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