

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

5 SEPTEMBER 2023

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Martin-Wells (In the Chair);

Councillors Paddy Brown, Pamela Hargreaves, Jim Lindridge and Mike Young.
Councilors Allen, Buchan and Little – Adult Services Members

Officers: Tony Hanson, Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods
and Regulatory Services
Israr Hussain, Economic Growth Manager
Katie Smith, Economic Growth Officer (Tourism)
Denise Wimpenny, Democratic Services Team

Also Present: Adam Bates, Blue Sail Consulting

6. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Darby and Thompson.

7. Declarations of Interest

None

8. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2023

Received.

9. Hartlepool Destination Management Plan *(Assistant Director, Development and Growth)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – General Exception applies

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services introduced the report which sought approval of the proposed Hartlepool Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2023, a copy of which was appended to the report. The report included the background and purpose of the DMP together with the core objectives for the visitor economy of Hartlepool including targets to assess the progress and success of interventions.

In support of the report the Committee received a detailed and comprehensive presentation from Adam Bates of Blue Sail Consulting outlining the vision, objectives and targets, underpinning principles in terms of experience development, working better together, marketing and positioning, Hartlepool's current spend and market growth segments. The presentation highlighted a need to focus on experience development in relation to events and animation, heritage and culture, active experiences and included resourcing and monitoring requirements.

The Committee debated issues arising from the presentation which included the following suggestions/comments to improve the visitor/tourism economy during which the representative responded to issues raised:-

- In relation to the Hartlepool Cultural Strategy 2022 emphasis was placed on the need to identify a strategy focussing on all year round activities in partnership with external partners and consultants.
- Visitor insights – The need to acknowledge and publicise the successes of the Tall Ships Event and that Hartlepool were capable of managing events of this type was emphasised.
- A Member commented on the importance of focussing on the leisure offer as a priority and outlined the benefits as a result.
- Members made a number of suggestions/comments which included the need for investment in hotel accommodation, the benefits of specialist hotel provision, disabled beach access, accessibility and inclusion, providing beach front activities/competitions, improving transport links and connectivity. Reference was made to the benefits of pedestrian access from the Marina to the Headland during the Tall Ships Event and Members were keen to see this explored as part of future proposals. The feasibility of utilising the port to facilitate cruise ship visitors was also highlighted and the benefits of reviewing opening times of visitor attractions to include bank holiday and Sunday opening was suggested.
- Concerns were expressed that events were not adequately publicised and emphasis was placed upon the need to improve communications and buy-in from residents to encourage more take-up by residents at events of this type. Members commented on the need to streamline the

number of websites and the importance of adequate signage to ensure visitors and residents were correctly signposted to tourist attractions in the town.

- The benefits of providing itineraries for visitors to include areas of cultural and historical interest were discussed. Examples of good practice in other areas were shared with Members including the various methods of assisting visitors to find their way around the main tourist attractions of the town. The option to link itineraries to child friendly activities linked to the cultural heritage of the town were suggested.
- In response to clarification sought in relation to sharing areas of good practice from other seaside towns, Members were provided with details of various successes and examples of good practice that could be explored in Hartlepool.
- Following clarification on the next steps Members were keen to be involved in developing the plan and monitoring progress in relation to delivery of the plan and requested that regular updates together with an action plan be provided to a future meeting of this Committee.

Following clarification regarding the delegation and monitoring arrangements, the following decision was agreed with no dissent.

Decision

- (i) That the Destination Management Plan 2023 be agreed.
- (ii) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Development and Growth to task the Economic Growth Team:-
 - (a) To develop the Hartlepool DMP as outlined and to work alongside the Communications and Marketing Team on marketing and promotional activities, working in partnership with key internal and external stakeholders; and
 - (b) Explore the potential to develop a Tourism Forum for Hartlepool, with proposed terms of reference and suggested partners and stakeholders to be part of this Forum; and
 - (c) Explore possible funding options for the delivery of the identified strategic priorities, objectives and actions as outlined in the Hartlepool DMP.
- (iii) That regular updates on delivery of the plan together with an action plan be provided to future meetings of this Committee.
- (iv) That the comments of Members be noted and actioned as appropriate.

10. Amalgamation of the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Forum *(Assistant Director, Development and Growth)*

Type of decision

Non key

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Members' approval was sought to the amalgamation of the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Forum and the Hartlepool Business Forum to become the Hartlepool Economic and Business Forum and to agree that the Economic Growth Team continue to provide a co-ordination and secretariat role to the new Forum. Members were asked to note the Terms of Reference for the new Hartlepool Economic and Business Forum, a copy of which was appended to the report.

Background information in relation to the establishment of the Hartlepool Business Forum was provided together with details of the benefits an amalgamated forum would bring. The Committee was referred to the new Terms of Reference which outlined the Forum's role, structure and support. The proposed Forum structure would be to continue a minimum of four quarterly events, including briefings, details of which were set out in the report. A Steering Group would be formed to manage and drive forward the affairs of the Forum with invitations to join the Steering Group open to the business community of Hartlepool.

In the discussion that followed presentation of the report Members requested that feedback be sought from members of the Forum in relation to the current commencement time of meetings of 8.00 am and that the option to vary the start times be explored. A query was raised as to whether another website was appropriate and it was suggested the option to utilise an existing website be considered. The need to establish a link between the Forum and this Committee was agreed.

Decision

- (i) That the amalgamation of the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Forum and the Hartlepool Business Forum to become Hartlepool Economic and Business Forum be agreed.
- (ii) That the Terms of Reference for the new Hartlepool Economic and Business Forum be noted.
- (iii) That the Council's Economic Growth Team continue to provide a co-ordination and secretariat role to the new Forum.
- (iv) That the comments of Members, as detailed above, in relation to meeting start times, website proposals and links between the Forum and this Committee be noted and actioned as appropriate.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 am.

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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