

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Strategic Priorities

Prosperous City: Stimulating growth in the local economy

Corporate Improvement Priorities

C101: Delivering Customer Focused Services

C102: Being 'One Council'

C104: Improving partnership working to deliver 'One Council'

1.0 WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE COMMITTEE?

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on tourism development and marketing in Sunderland and through Tourism Tyne and Wear, the Area Tourism Partnership for Tyne and Wear.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Following the transfer of strategic responsibility for tourism to One NorthEast in 2004, a Regional Tourism Strategy was created to be implemented through the North East Tourism Network comprising the Regional Tourism Team at One North East and four Area Tourism Partnerships (ATP's), one in each of the sub regions - Tyne and Wear, Northumberland, Durham and Tees Valley.

2.2 Development of the Tyne and Wear ATP, now named Tourism Tyne and Wear, was led by Sunderland City Council. The interim Shadow Board, chaired by Sunderland City Council's previous Chief Executive, achieved its goals of producing the Area Tourism Management Plan and Business Plan following successful consultation with tourism businesses and organisations. In addition to this, Single Programme funding totalling £850,000 for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 was secured. Sunderland City Council is the accountable body for this funding. Currently new funding applications are being submitted for a further £1.4 million for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.

With contributions by the local authorities, Newcastle Gateshead Initiative (NGI) and private sector income, the total projected budget for Tourism Tyne and Wear for 2006/2011 is £3.9 million.

2.3 Following recruitment of the Tourism Tyne and Wear Board, the Shadow Board was disbanded in December 2006. ATP staff were appointed which include a Tourism Co-ordinator, an Administrator/Data Steward and a Tourism Business Relationship Manager led by Andrew Dixon, the ATP's Executive Director. All posts are based at the offices of NGI. The appointment of a small group of core staff was carried out in line with Tourism Tyne and Wear's commitment to creating an ATP which is based on a smarter way of working between the 5 local authorities, NGI and public/private sector partners rather than one large new organisation.

3.0 CURRENT POSITION

3.1 Tourism Tyne and Wear Activity

Over the past year Tourism Tyne and Wear has delivered a range of tourism development activity and plays a key role in the North East Tourism Network. Sunderland is actively involved in this activity, with the Tourism Development Manager providing support and coordination for the delivery of marketing and business development activities. Some of these include:

- 3.1.1 **Discover Card** - A Tyne and Wear 'Discover' card has been developed in order to encourage the local market to take advantage of attractions on their doorstep. The card gives discounts and offers for Tyne and Wear's attractions and is available for a nominal £1 at Tourist Information Centres.

The results of how the Discover Pass has been used over the summer have been collected and collated. Between March and October 3,875 passes were taken through a combination of Tourist Information Centres, accommodation providers and University open days. Over 40 attractions took part in the pass offering special offers including discounts on entry fees and purchases at gift shops, and a range of different buy one get one free offers. The pass was used 1,586 times which it is estimated saw an additional 2,640 people through the doors of attractions. A small group has been established to look at developing the pass for 2009.

- 3.1.2 **Campaigns** - A number of campaigns are being driven at the sub-regional level including an Irish Campaign using the football, shopping and nightlife product. This campaign includes marketing and PR activity and it is envisaged it will run for at least 2 years (until 2010) and has attracted significant press interest.

In 2008 a Coastal campaign has been developed and implemented in order to increase the awareness of visiting the urban coastline in Tyne and Wear to the local market. This has been successful and will form the basis of a 'Countryside' campaign early in 2009.

- 3.1.3 **Pocket Guide** - In March 2009 a Pocket Guide will be produced to include NewcastleGateshead, Sunderland, North Tyneside and South Tyneside, The guide will be distributed locally, nationally and internationally and will be part funded by advertisers. A brief is currently being agreed.

3.2 Sunderland Tourism Development Activity

- 3.2.1 **Legible Cities** – Consultants City ID have completed Sunderland's 'Legible City Framework'. This will develop information and way finding solutions to improve the image and experience of being in the city, including transport, signage, street furniture and infrastructure. An Action Plan has been drawn up which is currently under review by the steering group. There will also be a complementary 'Legibility' project for Tyne and Wear and the focus of this piece of work will be to create a toolkit of sub-regional maps to support the Sunderland and Newcastle activity currently underway.

- 3.2.2 **C2C Improvements** - Tourism development activity to improve the end stretch of the C2C will be complete in early 2009. Funding has been secured from Single Programme and an artist has been selected for three commissions including a gateway piece by Wearmouth Bridge, waymarkers along the route to the coast and

a significant end piece at Roker. There will also be associated environmental improvements, all designed to make the route more attractive and welcoming to cyclists. It is envisaged that the improvements will be officially launched at Easter 2009 as the artwork is inspired by the work of Bede and his calculations on how we work out Easter Day which is still used today.

3.2.3 **Wearmouth-Jarrow** - The Tourism Development Manager continues to play an active role in the development of the World Heritage Site nomination. This includes responding to consultation on the proposals for visitor management and marketing.

3.2.4. **Marketing Activity** - The main visitor website www.visitsunderland.com has been significantly improved with new data collected via desti.ne. The site is now more flexible with a higher level of content. The technical side of the project is supported by the City Council's IT specialists and the design supports the delivery of the image strategy.

The 2009 Sunderland Visitor Guide will be distributed in January 2009 in line with the start of the holiday booking season. The 2008 guide has been very well received and 30,000 copies have been distributed through a number of national and international channels as well as within the city in order to improve local perceptions and support the 'Visiting Friends and Relatives' market.

Sunderland continues to work with 'City Breaks' a national tourism network group. 20 cities are members including Bath, Newcastle, Leeds, Carlisle, Manchester, Derby, Cambridge, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Cardiff, Stoke-on-Trent, Bradford and Leicester. Activity and support includes sharing best practice, baseline research, marketing activity, training, skills development and awareness of the national/international context for tourism development.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Sunderland's significance and profile as a visitor destination has been raised over the past year as a result of the City Council's active participation in Tourism Tyne and Wear and the additional resources secured during this period have supported tourism marketing and development in Sunderland.

4.2 The Tourism Tyne and Wear Area Management Plan sets the context for Sunderland's Destination Management Plan which is now being drafted for consultation and completion in 2009.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report for information.

6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 The following background papers have been used to compile this report and are available upon request.

- Tyne and Wear-Cities, Coast and Culture
- Tourism Management Plan 2006/2010
- Tourism Tyne and Wear Business Plan 2006/2008

7.0 GLOSSARY

ATP – Area Tourism Partnership
NGI – Newcastle Gateshead Initiative

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