

Report to: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 25th of October 2018

Lead Member/Officer: Leader/Head of Customers, Communications and Marketing

Report Author: Team Leader: Tourism, Marketing and Events

Title: Tourism Progress Report

1. What is the report about?

To detail the progress achieved to date with various tourism initiatives and their contribution towards delivering the Council's overall ambition in relation to economic development.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

It was agreed after making an initial report to Communities Scrutiny in September 2017 that an update report would be submitted in 12 months' time.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Scrutiny considers the report and provides observations on the matters reported herein.

4. Report details

Partnership: Destination Management

The Denbighshire Destination Management Plan was launched in October 2017 with the following aims:

- Increase the number of staying visitors and high-yield visitors to the region
- Provide a memorable and high-quality experience for all visitors
- Contribute to the aim of growing Wales' market share of domestic and international tourism
- Strike a balance between promoting our most popular sites, protecting our environment, and spreading the benefit of tourism across the whole region

The Plan was developed through the Denbighshire Destination Partnership in conjunction with DCC services and other key partners including the AONB. It paid particular attention to the five main themes (Housing, Environment, Young People, Connected Communities and Resilient Communities) of Denbighshire County Council's Corporate Plan 2017-20.

The Destination Management structure described in the previous report continues. The Tourism Forum remains a key fixture for the industry with over 80 businesses in attendance at each of the last two (appendix 1).

The Tourism Team is engaged with North Wales Tourism and DCC Heritage on a scheme to move Rhyl Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and Rhyl Museum to a new shared site at Rhyl Railway Station. This will create a new visitor attraction in the town and potentially boost attendance for both facilities. Visitor numbers to Rhyl and Llangollen TICs have seen an increase of 1.5% and 1.4% respectively in the period 2017-18. The tourism team has also worked closely with DCC officers responsible for the marketing of SC2 by keeping the tourism industry informed about the development and engaging with Visit Wales on the project's behalf.

Tourist Information Points have been opened at St Asaph Library (April 2018) and Denbigh Library (May 2018) (appendix 2). A new leaflet, Five Journeys, has been developed to push visitors to locations around the county and we continue to print and promote the eight town trails through our distribution service (appendix 3).

Denbighshire's Tourism Ambassador Programme is on track. Funded in-part via the Rural Development Programme, this innovative scheme seeks to broaden the appeal of ambassadorship by developing on-line modules which can be easily accessed by business. The project is currently completing its module content, digital delivery and branding (appendix 4).

Partnership: North East Wales and North Wales

Routes to the Sea, the £40,000 Welsh Government funded project gathered momentum in 2018 with the creation of a number of high-quality films (appendix 5), photographs and the innovative use of bloggers to provide a more authentic view of our area and engagement with a broader audience (appendix 6).

The project also ran a Sea Food Challenge event with businesses across North East Wales participating. The winner was Gales, Llangollen and the event created some very positive PR (appendix 7)

The Tourism Team has built on North Wales' growing reputation as one of the World's key visitor destinations, successfully drawing down £140,000 of Welsh Government funding as part of a North Wales partnership bid (Conwy, Anglesey, Gwynedd, Wrexham, Flintshire and Denbighshire). The project aims to promote the winter tourism offer and develop routes inspired by the National "Wales Way" Project.

Events

A new, simplified Event Notification Process was launched in January 2018 (appendix 8). Event organisers now are asked to fill out a short form and advised that it is their responsibility to contact relevant officers within the authority. Officers are listed on the form to make this task easier for event organisers. All Event Notification Forms submitted to the tourism team are immediately circulated to the officers in the process. All or most liaison takes place between the relevant officer and event organiser. Feedback has, in general, been positive from both event organiser and DCC officers. So far over 100 events have engaged with the process.

Partnership: Marketing and the Visitor Experience

The Tourism Team has worked hard to innovate over the last 12 months. Regular digital newsletters have been sent to our business and visitor databases (appendix 9). Furthermore, we've increased our activity around social media and ensured the digital products we have created work well across these platforms. This approach has seen a significant increase in traffic to our digital channels (appendix 10). We monitor our digital channels so we can understand where we are most effective. (Appendix 11 and appendix 12).

Aside from digital marketing we have created a number of PR pieces that have gained press interest including the Tourism Forum, STEAM figures and the importance of the economic impact of tourism in the local economy (appendix 13)

Though the current STEAM figures cover 2017 its worth mentioning that this was another good year for tourism with the economic impact increasing by 2.3% on the 2016 figure to £490m. The current figures are encouraging: we are engaging more effectively with potential visitors and creating products that fuel that engagement. It's important also to recognise the significance of getting things right on the ground so that the experience lives up to the promise. For this reason we focus as strongly on Destination Management (Tourism Forum, Destination Partnership, Tourism Ambassador Scheme, Tourist Information Centres, Tourist Information Points, Town Trails, Literature Distribution to name a few of the elements). At the root of this approach is partnership working.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

Environment: Attractive and supported well-being and economic prosperity

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

Not applicable

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

Not applicable

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

Not applicable

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

Not applicable

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

Not applicable

11. Power to make the Decision

Section 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution states that Scrutiny Committee may "review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas".

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