

## England's tourism strategy

### Summary

This paper updates members on recent developments with the new England Tourism Strategy, and will be accompanied by a presentation from James Berresford (Chief Executive, VisitEngland).

### Recommendations

That members note the report and comment on the further development of England's tourism strategy, as outlined in the presentation.

### Action

Subject to members' comments, officers to take forward any suggested actions.

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### Background

1. At its September 2009 meeting the CTS Board received a presentation on England's Tourism Strategy from James Berresford (Chief Executive, VisitEngland). The strategy focused on four key objectives: Great Destinations, Quality First, Competitive Marketing and Easy Access (set out at **Annex A**).
2. Members raised the following issues in response to the strategy presentation:
  - The importance of the skills agenda seemed to be missing;
  - A more inclusive approach to local tourism businesses was needed;
  - The strategic importance of London to tourism in neighbouring counties seemed to be missing;
  - Destinations must be accessible for tourists with mobility issues, and;
  - The strategy should look to address the currently confusing accreditation of accommodation.

### Progress

3. The LGA has engaged further with the development of the Tourism Strategy in a number of forums, at both officer and member level. Our lobbying has taken the view, reflecting the Board's political steer, that tourism is predominantly a place based industry, and that England's new Tourism Strategy should strive to create a nation of authentic destinations, grounded in local communities and experience and serviced by high quality and high value-added attractions and skilled labour.
4. It follows that the council role, as the local strategic leader and place-shaper, must be at the heart of this model. There is some work appropriate for the national level, for example strategy and priority setting on skills policy, marketing or regulatory issues. But we see very little case for an extensive regional or national quango delivery role. Developing and marketing places as destinations is at the heart of councils' role in looking after their local economy and environment and, in line with wider LGA lobbying, we believe there should be as little intervention in this as possible.
5. Visit England have further developed the strategy in recent months, refining its narrative and exploring further some of the potential delivery implications. They have also tested the initial drafts with stakeholders through the Partners for England forum, which met on 22 September 2009, and in a series of bilateral meetings.

## **Next Steps**

6. The Strategy will be further developed over the New Year, in discussions with Stakeholders. In addition to the January 11 CTS Board, the LGA will contribute to this discussion at the Partners for England forum on 13 January, and Cllr Margaret Eaton will have a further meeting with Lady Penelope Cobham (Chair, Visit England) in March. The final strategy is expected to be launched in late March.
7. The annual LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport conference, in Gateshead from 30-31 March 2010, will have a stream of workshops on the issue of Tourism and the Visitor Economy. These will be focused on developing and articulating the local government sector's manifesto "asks" on tourism, and will include a workshop on "developing great destinations" that James Berresford will speak at. James will also join the Chief Executives of other DCMS quangos on a plenary panel session at the conference.
8. The LGA is also shortly to begin a piece of work, jointly with VisitEngland, exploring the value of tourism to rural economies. The work will draw on existing research and new case studies of best practice to evidence the local benefits to a strong rural visitor economy. The work is likely to be followed-up at a joint VE-LGA conference in mid-2010.
9. The LGA will also undertake a piece of work with VE to look at the future of Tourist Information Centres (TICs). As with libraries modernisation, we believe one of the keys to success is making use of co-location opportunities, such as housing TICs in local museums or visitor attractions. In some areas the TIC function can be more appropriately delivered by local businesses and councils will need to look at all the options to ensure efficient delivery.

## **Financial Implications**

10. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **Implications for Wales**

11. VisitEngland's remit does not extend to Wales.

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## Annex A

By 2020 England will rate among the five top tourism-earning destinations in Europe and the ten top tourism-earning destinations in the world, renowned worldwide for high levels of visitor satisfaction, profitable and innovative businesses and a culture of sustainable tourism development, focusing on authenticity

	Great Destinations	Quality First	Competitive Marketing	Easy Access
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stimulate re-investment and product renewal in the English tourism product</li> <li>Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>quality of the public domain</li> <li>development of products and services</li> </ul> </li> <li>Reduce fragmentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>welcome and service</li> </ul> </li> <li>Strong partnership of public and private sector to implement the national skills strategy</li> <li>Enhance productivity and competitiveness of tourism businesses</li> <li>Quality assurance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve perceptions</li> <li>Market England cost-effectively</li> <li>Increase use of available capacity – by time and place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further develop easy and low cost travel within and to England</li> <li>Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve points of arrival</li> <li>Streamlining of visa arrangements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Scope of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand map development</li> <li>Customer &amp; product knowledge</li> <li>Product interpretation</li> <li>Events (2012)</li> <li>Business Tourism</li> <li>Destination &amp; place development</li> <li>Sustainability</li> <li>Industry cohesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills &amp; entrepreneurship</li> <li>Employee rewards</li> <li>Customer relations &amp; retention</li> <li>Accommodation quality</li> <li>Business development/innovation</li> <li>Welcome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand buy-in &amp; support</li> <li>Creative application</li> <li>Market knowledge/segmentation</li> <li>Targeted promotion (inc media engagement)</li> <li>Capitalising on events (2012-15-18)</li> <li>Customer loyalty/relationship marketing</li> <li>Pride in England</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Airports &amp; seaports</li> <li>Air route development</li> <li>Railway infrastructure</li> <li>Transport service quality</li> </ul>
<p>Strategy &amp; vision, research, best practice and evaluation Principles of sustainability</p>				