

10 September 2012

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°CLOA Case Studies: Visitor Economy and Growth

Purpose

For information.

Summary

This paper presents a number of case studies about councils' leadership role in the visitor economy.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the case study.

Action

To be taken forward by officers as directed by Members.

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°CLOA Case Studies: Visitor Economy and Growth

1. The value of the visitor economy to Staffordshire and the employment sustained therein has been largely undervalued by the public sector in Staffordshire. Individual district and borough councils, and the city of Stoke-on-Trent, engaged with the private sector and, in some cases, ran marketing campaigns and operated tourist information centres; however these activities were always locally focussed. The potential for promoting Staffordshire as a whole, creating greater consumer awareness and economies of scale in terms of marketing and business support, were largely ignored.
2. This situation, pre-2006/7, has been transformed to a significant extent through the commitment and vision of the County Council. Initially, the Council brokered 2 separate tourism strategies for the north and south of the County, both of which engaged the private sector and which concluded that a cohesive approach on behalf of the whole county, including Stoke on Trent, would produce increased visitors and spend. In turn this would increase levels of employment across the sector.
3. To implement this strategy the Council committed the whole of its tourism team and substantial revenue funding to the management of the newly formed Destination Management Partnership, Destination Staffordshire, and to the promotion of the county under the [Enjoy Staffordshire](#) brand.
4. Over the intervening period, Destination Staffordshire has managed an expanding programme of marketing and business support, all largely managed by the Council's tourism team and engaging an increasing number of private and public sector partners. It was awarded the title of Best Tourism Board by the readers of Group Leisure magazine in 2009 and is widely acknowledged to be the most effective and supported tourism economy in the West Midlands.
5. Since 2008, when evaluation was first commissioned, total volume of tourism trips to Staffordshire have grown by 9.5%, value of spend by 9.2% to just under £1 billion, and direct employment in the leisure visitor economy now stands at 19,124, an increase over 2008 of 11.5%.

Tourism in Wakefield

6. Tourism in Wakefield is playing an increasing important role and making a significant contribution towards economic and social wellbeing. Wakefield has become a major visitor destination for Yorkshire as a result of recognition of the area's excellent and high quality cultural offer which includes The Hepworth Wakefield, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Theatre Royal, National Coal Mining Museum for England and the National Trust's Nostell Priory.

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7. These leading attractions received over 1 million visits in 2011/12 and are complemented by commercially owned attractions such as Xscape, Diggerland and outdoor leisure facilities such as Pugneys Country Park and Anglers Country Park, as well as the Council's major events programme, which attracted over 170,000 visitors in 2011/12.
8. Wakefield Council has invested significantly in developing tourism in the district in recent years, from supporting major cultural attractions such as the Hepworth Wakefield and Yorkshire Sculpture Park to developing its own tourism attractions, events and festival programme; resulting in a positive impact on the local economy. The Creative Partners Grant Scheme, which is open to Wakefield based organisations, supports the delivery of innovative cultural activity and further helps ensure a wide range of activities for visitors to enjoy.
9. Tourism is a key economic driver for the district, worth £323m to the local economy employing 9,000 FTE jobs (Yorkshire Forward Economic Impact Report –Tourism 2008). For example, the 500,000 visitors to the Hepworth during its first year contributed an estimated £10m to the local economy and a recent economic impact assessment of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park estimated its annual contribution to the local economy at £5m. Development work at Pontefract Castle over the last 18 months has resulted in visitor figures rising to 49,727 in 2011/12, a 66% increase on the previous year.
10. Through developing local partnerships, Wakefield Council aims to maximise its investment in the regeneration of the district's infrastructure to benefit the visitor economy whilst providing outstanding value for money for local people. This is also supported by the role of Welcome to Yorkshire, the Destination Management Organisation for Yorkshire.

Boosting the visitor economy through a major sporting event

11. The Tour of Britain has become one of the cornerstone events of the UK's sporting calendar and the country's biggest professional cycling race and free to spectate sporting event.
12. In 2011 Suffolk County Council, working in partnership with Norfolk County Council and with support from district and borough councils, secured Stage 7 of the tour. Adnams breweries acting as a principal partner, made a financial contribution towards the costs of delivering the stage and funding from Legacy Trust supported community engagement and events along the route.
13. Stage 7 of the Tour of Britain started in Bury St Edmunds and involved 199km of racing through some of Suffolk's most iconic towns and villages before heading into Norfolk and finishing on the Royal Sandringham Estate.
14. The stage was watched live by an estimated 150,000 spectators with a further 600,000 watching it on ITV4 later in the evening and the following day in a repeat programme. The highlights programme was also shown around the world by 12 television stations. The

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increasing interest and profile of the Tour of Britain in these countries provided a platform to exploit the potential for short breaks and holidays to the region.

15. The event had a significant impact on the local economy with a Net total expenditure of almost 1.8m, of which an estimated £867,152 was generated in Suffolk. An estimated 16% of spectators stayed overnight with 17% visiting from outside the eastern region.
16. Awareness of Suffolk County Council's involvement in bringing the event to the county was relatively high with 65% of respondents being aware of the council's role in hosting the stage.
17. The opportunity to host the "Grand Depart" in Sept 2012 provides even greater opportunities for increased economic impact, tourism and media coverage with the teams and media anticipated to arrive at least two to three days prior to the race start.
18. Furthermore, as the first major sporting event post Olympic Games it will also be the first opportunity for spectators to get up close and personal with the Olympic medallists participating in the event.