

6 February 2014

CLOA Case Studies – Visitor Economy

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper shares examples about how councils are helping to improve the productivity of the visitor economy by supporting local businesses, improving the value of the offer and improving welcome.

Recommendation

Members are invited to note the report.

Actions

To be taken forward by officers as directed by members.

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CLOA Case Studies – Visitor Economy

Broadland District Council and Norfolk County Council

Broadland District Council has delivered a training programme called 'Trading Up' to small and medium enterprises operating in their rural economy. The programme was funded by Norfolk County Council.

The training was directed towards any business that wanted to attract more visitors to Norfolk. Participants included bed and breakfasts, cafes and taxi operators. The programme found that often small businesses, as well as lacking finances, lack the skills, awareness and understanding of how to improve their quality of offer.

The programme offered a course of free training sessions covering key tourism aspects including customer service, marketing, business and consumer law, IT and internet skills.

The skills, knowledge and networking opportunities offered during the training meant business owners were more confident and able to improve their visitor offer themselves and in partnership with other small businesses in the locality.

Brighton & Hove City Council

Brighton & Hove City Council recognised that a friendly welcome is crucial as part of an attractive and quality offer and the council and its partners have been working to get all sectors of the community on board with this.

It has launched one of the UK's first city based 'Greeters' schemes. The scheme is a worldwide initiative by the Global Greeter Network (GGN) which is growing rapidly with more than 30 cities worldwide offering the service in May 2013.

The project is based on local volunteers providing a bespoke, pre-booked, introduction and welcome to the city on a two to four-hour walking tour. The scheme is a way of securing greater community involvement in welcoming visitors.

The volunteers are trained, 'branded' and operate out of the VisitBrighton Tourist Information Centre. These enthusiastic volunteers share their passion and local knowledge with visitors to create a unique welcoming environment for visitors.

They also provide a visible reminder of the importance of tourism, helping local people to understand its value and spread the benefits of tourism throughout the city.

Barnsley Council

Barnsley Council is developing its visitor offer by capitalising on its heritage. On average, Barnsley's museums attract one million visitors a year, contributing in excess of £13 million a year to the local economy. But Barnsley plans to improve these figures by securing funding to maintain and improve its museums.

Cannon Hall Museum, a flagship attraction, has around 500,000 visitors each year. The interpretation of the park and gardens are being transformed following a grant of £50,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. A further £100,000 of European funding will enable improvements to be made to the Hall itself. Future plans include a major £3.5 million funding application to restore and transform the Park, Gardens and Lakes.

A new multi-million pound museum, Experience Barnsley, opened in summer 2013. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and European Development Fund (ERDF), this is a major attraction right in the centre of Barnsley, directing footfall and spend to businesses in the town centre. It is a signpost for visitors to the town to discover what the rest of the Borough has to offer.

Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Warrington Councils

Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, and Warrington Borough Council, have been working in partnership with local small and medium sized businesses through the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) Marketing Cheshire, to develop a local food brand for the region through Tourism Connect and Food Connect projects.

Tourism Connect aims to increase the competitiveness and productivity of the tourism industry in the rural areas of Cheshire.

Food Connect aims to increase the competitiveness and productivity of the food tourism sector through improved marketing of local food businesses. The scheme hopes to increase the turnover of local food tourism businesses, create collaborations between local businesses to meet visitor needs and help market their services.