

Information/Discussion Paper

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22 February 2016

Project to develop a new strategic approach to tourism

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1** To enable members to review the final consultant's report on the recommended future strategic approach to tourism, before it is considered by Cabinet on 8 March.
- 1.2** To seek members' views on the proposed recommendations to be considered by Cabinet on 8 March.
- 1.3** The report, 'A Strategic Outcomes Proposition for Cheltenham', is attached at Appendix A and members will receive a presentation from the tourism consultant, followed by a Q&A session with the consultant and the Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles.

2. Background

- 2.1** In creating The Cheltenham Trust, the Council handed over responsibility for the tourism service and the tourist information office to the Trust. However, the Council retained accountability for developing the strategic approach to tourism, acknowledging its unique role as the democratically elected body for the town and its role as convenor and "place-shaper".
- 2.2** Against a backdrop of an increasingly complex tourism landscape locally, regionally and nationally and financial constraints, it was recognised that a new and sustainable approach to tourism was needed. In summer 2015, the Council commissioned tourism consultants, Creative Tourist Consults, to assist in the development of a new strategic approach to tourism for the town.
- 2.3** Cheltenham Tourism Partnership had already been established, but was a fledgling partnership that had only met once. It was recognised that, in order for any future approach to be sustainable, this group of key stakeholders would need to be able to support the outcomes of the project. Therefore the key deliverable for the project was an outcomes proposition for Cheltenham's tourism offer behind which all key stakeholders could align, that would boost the tourism economy and provide clarity on how the council delivers the proposition and how the council will measure success and the impact on public value in the widest sense.

3. How the project was delivered

3.1 A commissioning group was established to lead the project, comprising:

- Cllr Rowena Hay, Cabinet Member for Healthy Lifestyles
- Pat Pratley, Deputy Chief Executive
- Julie Finch, Chief Executive of The Cheltenham Trust
- Kevan Blackadder, Cheltenham Business Partnership Manager
- Richard Gibson, Strategy & Engagement Manager
- Gill Morris, Client Officer

3.2 A cabinet member working group was also established to ensure member engagement during the project. Membership was as follows:

Cllr Andrew Chard	Cllr Flo Clucas	Cllr Diggory Seacome
Cllr John Payne	Cllr Chris Ryder	Cllr Adam Lillywhite
Cllr Anne Regan	Cllr Paul Baker	Cllr Colin Hay
Cllr Max Wilkinson	Cllr Garth Barnes	Cllr Duncan Smith
Cllr Wendy Flynn	Cllr Matt Babbage	Cllr Rowena Hay

3.3 The project began with an extensive consultation and analysis phase. This involved:

- desk research, looking at all available tourism data, covering a wide range of strategies, documents and statistics
- an audit of digital assets and capabilities (websites, mailing lists etc)
- 1-2-1 consultation interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (listed in addendum F to the consultant's report)
- Workshops with Cheltenham Tourism Partnership and the Cabinet Member Working Group

3.4 From the evidence gathered, the consultants produced a 'situational analysis' report, setting out their findings, identifying emerging issues and mapping the foundations on which to build the new approach. Further meetings were held at this point with the tourism partnership, the cabinet member working group and also cabinet/board to present the data and generate ideas for the new approach, from which the outcomes proposition report has been developed.

3.5 A draft of the full outcomes proposition report has been reviewed by both the cabinet member working group and the tourism partnership to ensure agreement with the direction of travel and alignment behind the proposed outcomes and recommendations.

4. Priorities for moving forward

4.1 The report includes an action plan with a large number of measures, but within this the consultants are recommending a number of priority actions (with timescales). These are to:

- Source additional capacity to drive the programme forward
- Commission a detailed gap analysis of cultural and major events to identify market opportunities and support year round programme development
- Commission an evaluation and research framework to create benchmark/baseline data

- Redesign the TIC – physical provision and presentation on site with appropriate updating online, through staff training etc
- Commission digital infrastructure development, notably for the visitcheltenham website
- Commission updating of the audio-visual assets for the town
- Schedule a review to consider further digital audits
- Commission new content to articulate the (cultural) tourism narrative
- Commission a short series of visitor itineraries to form the foundations for travel trade communications and consumer-facing packages
- Review whether a digital communications role is needed after twelve months

4.2 It is important to note that the investment to deliver the action plan is not intended to be secured solely from Council resources.

4.3 The stakeholders who make up Cheltenham Tourism Partnership will be key to the delivery of the action plan and therefore, as part of their review of the final report, they were asked to identify their priorities for moving forward. They identified four internally focused priorities around the delivery model:

- Defining what partners do now
- Defining internal and shared resources
- Mapping the strengths of the partnership – how does the partnership organise itself? Who do the partners represent? What do partners bring to the table in terms of skills and resources and what can partners get out of the partnership?
- Defining the relationship with Cotswolds DMO

And two related to delivery:

- Place branding to define Cheltenham's identity
- Developing a shared calendar of activities

4.4 These priorities, together with those identified in the action plan, will form the focus of activity over the coming months.

4.5 This report also needs to be considered in the context of work on wider economic development, notably the report by Athey Consulting entitled '*Cheltenham Economic Strategy: Developing Cheltenham as a business location – January 2015 – Final report: options, ideas and recommendations*' and the work that is being undertaken jointly by Cheltenham, Gloucester, Tewkesbury districts and Gloucestershire County Council to consider opportunities for capitalising on economic development for Gloucestershire. There is considerable complementarity across this spectrum of work and it will be important to ensure that all the resulting recommendations are considered collectively to develop an aligned approach to tourism and wider economic development.

4.6 It should also be noted that responsibility for tourism is moving from the portfolio of the Deputy Chief Executive to the Managing Director, Place and Economic Development to ensure alignment between economic activity and tourism.

5. Proposed recommendations to Cabinet

5.1 The proposed recommendations Cabinet will be asked to consider are:

- i. To accept the consultant's report
- ii. To delegate authority to the Managing Director, Place and Economic Development to further consider the delivery plan and the proposed delivery mechanism in consultation with the Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles.
- iii. To allocate the funding required to source the additional capacity needed to take the programme forward

6. Next Steps

6.1 Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- consider and comment on the consultant's report, and
- consider and comment on the proposed recommendations to Cabinet

6.2 The Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee is invited to present the views of the Committee at the Cabinet meeting on 8 March 2016.

Background Papers	None
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Accountability	Councillor Rowena Hay, Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles
Attachments	Appendix A: Report by Creative Tourist Consults – 'A strategic tourism outcomes proposition for Cheltenham'