

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet 19 April 2011

Tourism and Marketing Strategy

Report of the Assistant Director Wellbeing & Culture on behalf of the Tourism & Marketing Working Party

Accountable member	Cabinet Member Sport & Culture, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
Accountable officer	Assistant Director Wellbeing & Culture, Sonia Phillips
Accountable scrutiny committee	Social & Community and Economic Business & Improvement
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	No
Executive summary	<p>The Council's business plan included a milestone to produce a marketing and tourism strategy for Cheltenham in order to maximise opportunities to attract UK based and overseas visitors and investors.</p> <p>The Overview & Scrutiny Committees of Social & Community and Economic & Business Improvement approved a decision to form a small, time limited working party to develop the strategy.</p> <p>The attached Tourism and Marketing Strategy is a result of the work undertaken by the Working Party and is reflective of feedback received from both parent Scrutiny Committees and stakeholders in the business and tourism community.</p>
Recommendation	Cabinet approves the Marketing & Tourism Strategy

Financial implications	<p>The medium term financial strategy for 2011/12 to 2016/17, approved by Council on 11th February 2011, includes a saving in the service of £50,000 in 2011/12 from the merger of the Tourism Information Centre and Art Gallery & Museums teams. In addition, a further budget saving of £50,000 has been approved for 2012/13 in respect of reduced costs of the service post redevelopment.</p> <p>Contact officer: Sarah Didcote, sarah.didcote@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264125</p>
-------------------------------	---

Legal implications	None directly arising from this report Contact officer: Nicolas Wheatley, nicolas.wheatley @tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272695
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	These plans include the creation of a single Marketing team within the merged service team. The main HR implication is around the creation of a single team to be achieved through the merger of the Tourist Information Centre Team and the Art Gallery & Museum Visitor Services. Informal consultation has been ongoing and the Unions are aware of the proposals. Dependent on the outcome of the HLF bid, the formal restructure process should commence April 2011. The merger of the two teams is set to realise savings in 2012-13 as identified in the budget proposals. Any post reductions, including any requirement for compulsory redundancies, will be identified as the restructure process progresses. The Council's policies regarding managing change (and any process to manage redundancy) will be followed, including assessing any associated cost implications. Contact officer: Donna Sheffield, donna.sheffield@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 774972
Key risks	The key risks are set out within Appendix 1 of this report.
Corporate and community plan Implications	The Strategy and Action Plan aligns directly with the Council's Corporate Plan through the delivery of the following outcomes and objectives in 2011\12: We attract more visitors and investors Arts & Culture are used as a means to strengthen communities, strengthen the economy and enhance & protect the environment. In addition the Strategy and Action Plan also contributes to the delivery of a number of Council's Corporate Plan outcomes and objectives in 2011\12, as follows: Cheltenham's natural and built environment is enhanced and protected Communities feel safe and are safe The council delivers improved outcomes for customers and communities whilst meeting our Bringing the Gap targets for cashable savings and increased income
Environmental and climate change implications	The impact and potential conflict between sustained and improved tourism against environmental and climate change programmes was identified as a key issue within the Strategy. There will be a need to ensure that full consideration is given to the environmental impact when delivering the action plan.

1. Background

- 1.1** The Council's business plan included a milestone to produce a marketing and tourism strategy for Cheltenham in order to maximise opportunities to attract UK based and overseas visitors and investors.
- 1.2** The Overview & Scrutiny Committees of Social & Community and Economic & Business Improvement approved a decision to form a small, time limited working party to develop the strategy. The Tourism & Marketing Working Group embarked upon a consultative process of engaging with a cross section of the business and tourism community, which included retail, culture and business sectors in order to seek their views upon Cheltenham as a visitor destination and how it currently markets itself.
- 1.3** In addition to this, the Working Group considered the key issues raised at the branding workshop convened in November 2009, and also reviewed financial and visitor data of the council's existing tourism and marketing provision.
- 1.4** As a result, a consultative draft Marketing & Tourism Strategy was presented to both Scrutiny Committees, which was subsequently circulated to stakeholders within the wider business and tourism community between May and June 2010. Feedback from a number of external stakeholders was received with the intention of presenting the revised and final version to both Committees in September prior to the Strategy going forward for Cabinet approval.
- 1.5** During the period of consultation announcements regarding the significant reductions in public sector funding were made by the new coalition government, along with its intention to abolish a number of agencies and bodies. These changes were likely to effect national and regional and partnership bodies responsible for tourism, as well as funding levels at County & District level.
- 1.6** In light of this uncertainty it was felt appropriate to await confirmation of the level to which tourism was to be affected by these changes and the funding reductions nationally, regionally and locally, before taking the Strategy back to Scrutiny for their final consideration prior to it going forward to Cabinet.
- 1.7** Announcements regarding changes to a number of government funded bodies have now been made as well as final details of the Comprehensive Spending Review. Whilst the full impact of the announcements was clearly understood the Strategy went back to both parent Overview & Scrutiny Committees for their final consideration in January.
- 1.8** Whilst there was disappointment with the time delay that has occurred in moving the Strategy forward, both Overview & Scrutiny Committees understood the rationale behind the delay.

2. Progress to date

- 2.1** Despite the delay officers within the Tourism team have been working towards the delivery of a number of actions and improvements identified within the action plan during the year. The progress of this work is as follows:
 - The merger of the Tourist Information Centre Team and the Art Gallery & Museum Visitor Services is progressing well - new job roles/structures have been graded and formal consultation with the Unions has commenced. The formal consultation process with the affected teams will start later this month. These plans include the creation of a single Marketing team within the merged service team.
 - Merger of the individual visitor guides from Cheltenham, Gloucester and the wider Cotswolds to one guide, and this was launched for 2011. The savings generated has resulted in a review of the current Tourism website being undertaken to consider changes

to the design scheme and to include more selling/commissioning/advertising opportunities to boost income generation.

- The Museum, Arts & Tourism Manager now sits on the Cheltenham Inward Investment working group meeting - and has been tasked with developing links between Economic Development and the draft Tourism Marketing Strategy. It is envisaged that this will result in the development of strategic working partnerships, projects and activities through marketing Cheltenham and the wider Cotswolds.
- Review of the Cotswold and Forest of Dean DMO took place in 2010. This has resulted in new working arrangements with DMO put in place, with a new Executive Officer Group completing a review of its strategy and the delivery of a work programme which aligns to Visit England Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010-2020.
- The Cabinet Member for Sustainability is currently working on a scheme to encourage sponsorship of roundabouts and green spaces by businesses and community groups
- The strategy and work programme focuses on 4 key interdependent objectives, which align to the national strategic plan while focusing on the local level. The key objectives are:
 - To increase England's global market share,
 - To offer destinations of distinction,
 - To champion a successful thriving tourism industry
 - To develop greater engagement between the visitor and the experience

In order to achieve these objectives, the following work has been identified and will now be absorbed with the Tourism service plan:

- Work has focused on developing media relations - to promote the area and increase our global market share; setting up the new Boardroom Style.com to ensure we offer new "attractions" and continue the development of our thriving tourism industry; and the publication of a single Accommodation Guide for 2011 which has helped the visitor combine a number of experiences in a single day and then relax overnight at one of the areas many high quality establishments.

- A significant project for the Group and Board for this year and next will be how we develop, manage and deliver tourism information. This project is going to take an in depth look at:

- (i) how we manage our data on the Destination Management System (DMS) and web;
- (ii) how our customers can access that information, whether it be on the web, out of hours, at our Visitor Information Centres, or elsewhere;
- (iii) the quality of our service provision at these access points, and much more.

3. Consultation and feedback

- 3.1** The Marketing & Tourism Working Group met 5 times and embarked upon a consultative process of engaging with a cross section of the business and tourism community, which included retail, culture and business sectors in order to seek their views upon Cheltenham as a visitor destination and how it currently markets itself.
- 3.2** In addition to this, the Working Group considered the key issues raised at the branding workshop convened in November 2009, and also reviewed financial and visitor data of the council's existing tourism and marketing provision.

- 3.3** A consultative draft Strategy was presented to both Scrutiny Committees, which was subsequently circulated to stakeholders within the wider business and tourism community who had been engaged initially.
- 3.4** The Working Party received the following feedback from external stakeholders during the consultation period May – July 2010.
- A generally positive response was received from the Cheltenham Arts Council.
 - A generally negative response was received from the Chairman of the Cheltenham Hospitality Association (who has subsequently stood down) who commented (among other things) on littering, the amount of financial support being given to the Everyman Theatre by the Borough Council, the need to withdraw funding from twinning activities, the risk of over-providing hotel and bed & breakfast accommodation, and the amount of gum deposited on the streets.
 - A joint response from a hotelier and two other guesthouse proprietors made a number of points, including what they considered to be the repetitiveness of the draft document. They suggested a pedestrian underpass at Boots Corner and the leasing of the Pump Room to an experienced private operator. They also objected to the relocation of the TIC to the Art Gallery and Museum site, believing that it should be in a retail unit in the town centre.
 - Response from the Chief Executive of the Everyman Theatre, commented on what he considered to be the lightness of the background data. He suggested that the entertainments venues and Festivals could be more effective if they worked together; and urged the Council to give more thought to the future of the Town Hall, bearing in mind that major music and comedy acts seem to be moving away to larger venues.
- 3.5** The final draft Strategy was presented to Social & Community and EB&I O&S Committees on 10th and 24th January retrospectively.
- 3.6** Social and Community O&S Committee unanimously approved the Strategy however wished to ensure that progress against the Action Plan was reported back to Committee in September. Economic Improvement & Business O&S Committee approved the Strategy however resolved that the Action Plan was to be revisited in light of the commissioning activities that were taking place across the council, and that it was supported by a breakdown of the financial implications.
- 3.7** Further work has subsequently been done to address the feedback received. Changes have been made to both the Strategy and the Action Plan to reflect the work now underway as part of the commissioning framework, and in particular the Leisure & Culture Review.
- 3.8** Having further considered the request to support the Action Plan with a full breakdown of the financial implications, the approach that will be taken is that each of the actions will have a developed business case, to be signed off by the relevant Cabinet member prior to moving forward.

4. Performance management –monitoring and review

- 4.1** The action plan will be built into the council's performance management framework and and service planning process on an annual basis.

Report author	Contact officer: Sonia Phillips sonia.phillips@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 774973
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk Assessment 2. Draft Tourism and Marketing Strategy
Background information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corporate Business Plan 2. Overview & Scrutiny Committee Report: June 2009 – Developing Marketing & Tourism Strategy. 3. Overview & Scrutiny Discussion Paper : March 2010 4. Overview & Scrutiny Briefing Note: November 2010 5. Overview & Scrutiny Report Soc & Com: 10 Jan 2011 EBI : 24 Jan 2011

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	I	L	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
1.01	If the council fails to plan for future tourism and marketing provision this may result in Cheltenham failing to maintain and improve it's position within the economic, tourism and business sector.	SP	December 2010	4	2	8	Accept	Ensure strategic decisions for marketing and tourism are reflective of future economic and business trends.	April.2011	JL	Wellbeing & Culture Risk register
1.02	If the council fails to understand the importance of marketing and tourism within the town's economic and business community this may result in lost partnership or funding opportunities at a time when there is great pressure on the council to achieve savings and continued efficiencies.	SP	December 2010	4	2	8	Accept	Engagement with key external stakeholder partners was a integral part of the draft Tourism & Marketing Strategy resulting in shared knowledge and understanding of responsibilities, challenges and need to maximise future partnership opportunities.	April 2011	JL	Wellbeing & Culture Risk register
1.03	If the council fails to integrate the strategy within the corporate strategy and commissioning framework this may result in the action plan not being delivered.	SP	December 2010	4	1	4	Accept	Once strategy has been approved actions will be incorporated into the corporate strategy 2011/12 and appropriate service plans. Outcomes identified in the strategy will be used to inform commissioning activity.	March 2011	SP	Wellbeing & Culture Risk register
1.04	If the council does not integrate the strategy with the emerging Local Enterprise Partnership	SP	December 2010	3	2	6	Reduce	Ensure close working with the economic development team	March 2011	JG	Policy & Performance

	framework this may result in Cheltenham failing to be in a position to develop future business and economic opportunities.							and Gloucestershire First to try and sustain business and economic development opportunities locally from which Cheltenham will benefit. Lobby to ensure that tourism, marketing and inward investment are seen as key priority areas for the new LEP.			risk register
1.05	If the council fails to understand the needs of existing and future visitors to Cheltenham this will result in a downturn in visitor numbers and investors in the town.	SP	December 2010	4	2	8	Accept	Ensure regular and consistent approach to analysis of visitor surveys and customer information which is monitored and service improvement made as necessary.	July 2011	JL\GN\	Wellbeing & Culture Risk register
1.06	If the cost of travel continues to increase significantly then there is a risk that tourist numbers will fall but an opportunity to market the tourism offer to residents in the local area.	SP	April 2011	3	3	9	Reduce	Ensure strategic decisions for marketing and tourism are reflective of future economic and business trends.	March 2012	JL	Wellbeing & Culture Risk register