

Discussion paper

Committee name
Social & Community O&S Committee

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Museum, Arts & Tourism Manager

Tourism & Marketing Strategy Update

Following the last progress report to the Committee, the Tourism team have continued to work towards / on the delivery of a number of actions and improvements that were identified within the Marketing & Tourism Strategy action plan. The progress of the work so far, is:

- 1) The merger of the frontline Tourist Information Centre (TIC) team and the Art Gallery & Museum (AG&M) visitor services team – into a combined Customer Services Team for both the Art Gallery & Museum and Tourism – was completed by June 2011. This became operational from July 2011, and the new team is currently running the Tourist Information Centre, prior to the re-location of the TIC into the new building.
- 2) Merger of the individual visitor guides from Cheltenham, Gloucester and the wider Cotswolds to one guide was successfully launched in 2011. Working in partnership on a shared visitor guide is continuing with the 2012 edition – with particular emphasis for this year in ensuring the distribution / presence of the visitor guide at key entry points to Britain i.e. Paddington Station and Heathrow Airport. With regards to Cheltenham Tourism, the savings generated from the merger have been used towards the publication of a specific *Discover Cheltenham* guide and a review of the current Cheltenham tourism website – initially exploring selling / advertising opportunities to boost income generation.
- 3) Following the review (in April 2010) of the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean DMO (Destination Management Organisation) – and the resulting withdrawal of the Forest of Dean from the DMO – the Executive Officer Group continues to meet on a monthly basis and this is attended by the Museum, Arts & Tourism Manager. The main activity of this group is to support the wider Cotswolds tourism sector through its revised strategy and work delivery programme – linking into the Visit England Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010-2020 – and with direct contribution to / and representation on the GFirst LEP Tourism Sector Group. The current membership of the Executive Officers Group is: GFirst, Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council, Cotswolds District Council, Tewksbury Borough Council and Stroud District Council – and two members from the Executive Officers Group are also representatives on the GFirst LEP Tourism Sector Group.
- 4) The strategy and work programme of the Cotswolds DMO focuses on four key interdependent objectives – which whilst aligning to the national strategic plan – also focus on delivery at a 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.
- 5) Significant projects for the Cotswolds DMO Group and Board are currently focussing on developing media relations – to promote the region and increase the global market share (particularly in relation to the Olympics); commissioning new market research on visitor perceptions to the Cotswolds, reviewing how statistical information on visitor numbers / business

information is being collated and distributed; and the quality of service provision for visitors to the region in accessing direct information (i.e. web or Tourist / Visitor Information Centre points).

- 6) With specific regards to Cheltenham Tourism, a number of key strands from the Tourism & Marketing Strategy Action Plan have been included within the Tourism Service Plan, as follows:
- Preparation and planning for the re-location of the Tourist Information Centre to the re-developed Art Gallery & Museum during 2013;
 - Reviewing the Cheltenham Tourism website - with the aim of focussing Cheltenham's tourism marketing more effectively. The review has included consultation / engagement with visitors and users (stakeholders) of the current site - gaining ideas for improvements for the visitor experience, attracting more income streams and new ways / initiatives of supporting local businesses and attractions within the town. Following this review, a grant application will be made to the Promoting Cheltenham Grant Fund for support in developing and launching a new website for Cheltenham Tourism;
 - Development of cross-working initiatives with Tourism and the Art Gallery & Museum through the creation of an Arts and Crafts specific Mobile App for touring around the Cotswolds (with funding from the Arts Council);
 - A proposed review of Street Dressing within the town – including linking into the proposals to improve displays, signage and information boards at key locations – as part of the Cheltenham Development Task Force project.

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