

**This matter is a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has been included in the relevant Forward Plan**

**Report of Executive Director, PLACE**

**Visitor Economy Strategy for Barnsley 2017-2020**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to gain cabinet approval and acceptance of a Visitor Economy Strategy for Barnsley 2017-2020.
- 1.2 To put in place a strategy to enable the Borough to realise tangible benefits from the development of the visitor economy including: enhanced profile for the Borough, increased visitor spend and economic impact, increased viability of attractions and visitor economy sector business, job creation, investment and an enhanced sense of pride in the Borough for residents.

**2. Recommendations**

**It is recommended that:**

- 2.1 **Cabinet adopts the Visitor Economy Strategy for Barnsley 2017-2020**
- 2.2 **The strategy's action plan priorities are implemented to realise the benefits associated with Visitor Economy Development.**

**3. Introduction / Background**

- 3.1 At a national level Visit England / Visit Britain have been recently amalgamated and are funded by the Department for Culture Media and Sport to be responsible for building England's tourism product, raising Britain's profile worldwide, increasing the volume and value of tourism exports and developing England and Britain's visitor economy.
- 3.2 Regionally there is a network of recognised Destination Management Organisations across the country that take on responsibility for promoting their particular areas and are often constituted as a tourism board, for example Visit Derbyshire or Visit Cambridge. Visit Barnsley has been constituted as a Community Interest Company and although very small scale it does provide an independent platform to promote Barnsley and is recognised by Visit England / Visit Britain as an official Destination Management Organisation, enabling Barnsley to participate in Visit England/ Visit Britain activities where it is appropriate to do so, for example Barnsley benefited from the Northern Futures Campaign in 2015-16.

- 3.3 Welcome to Yorkshire is a regional organisation which has developed out of its forerunner the Yorkshire Tourist Board. Welcome to Yorkshire's stated aim is: 'to grow the county's visitor economy' and its main focus is PR and Promotion. Welcome to Yorkshire has been very successful in building a strong and recognisable brand for Yorkshire and in particular has used events such as the Tour de France and the Tour de Yorkshire to raise Yorkshire's profile on the international stage and consolidate the brand. Barnsley is a member of Welcome to Yorkshire, paying an annual subscription of £15,000 which enables Barnsley to be promoted on Welcome to Yorkshire's digital marketing platforms and provides the opportunity (at extra cost) to be included in Welcome to Yorkshire's advertising campaigns and to participate in events such as Tour de Yorkshire. In addition attractions within the Borough also have to be independent members of Welcome to Yorkshire to receive these benefits.
- 3.4 A strategy for the development of the visitor economy in Yorkshire and Humber 2015- 2020 was produced by Tourism UK in 2015. With the demise of the Yorkshire and Humber Local Government Association; this has not been implemented as intended. The document does however serve to inform individual Council's in the development of their own strategies. This has been considered in the development of the Visitor Economy Strategy for Barnsley, in particular Tourism UK's model for investment to grow the visitor economy underpins the document as a guiding principle; see diagram at Appendix 1
- 3.5 The Sheffield City Region does not cite tourism and the visitor economy explicitly in its priorities; however South Yorkshire Chief Executives have expressed an interest in raising Culture and the Visitor Economy up this agenda. There is the opportunity to do this as part of the current Strategic Economic Plan refresh process. To this end The CEO of the Peak District National Park is currently leading a task and finish group on South Yorkshire Tourism..
- 3.6 Barnsley is atypical in that its main stock of visitor attractions are predominantly either owned or supported by the Council: i.e. the five attractions within the Barnsley Museums portfolio: (Cannon Hall Museum Park and Gardens, Worsborough Mill and Country Park, Experience Barnsley Museum and Discovery Centre, the Cooper Gallery, and Elsecar) are Council owned, with others such as Wentworth Castle Gardens and Calypso Cove indoor Waterpark (part of Barnsley Premier Leisure's Metrodome operation) and The Civic are currently supported by the Council though grants. RSPB is a significant attraction within the charitable sector and Cannon Hall Farm is the only substantial visitor attraction within the private sector. This means that the Council has an unusually high stake in this sector.
- 3.7 In this Visitor Economy Strategy for Barnsley it is important to differentiate between Barnsley Museums as five visitor attractions for the borough attracting visitors both from within the borough and further afield to contribute to the Visitor Economy and the Barnsley Museums

Service that increasingly delivers a range of activities and services to local people. Particularly now that Arts Council National Portfolio Status (NPO) has been secured for 2018 - 2022, the latter is able to deliver across a range of council agendas, such as health and wellbeing, education and community engagement, for example through volunteering.

#### **4. Proposal and Justification**

- 4.1 Whilst not a statutory requirement this strategy will position the Council to lead on coordinating activity in the Visitor Economy Sector across the borough by strengthening partnership activity aligned to a clear action plan.
- 4.2 The strategy makes use of available data and evidence from Visit Britain and Visit England Insight in so far as it is relevant for this area to identify where activity should be targeted and to enable effective monitoring of progress. In common with other regions there is however very limited regional and local level data which is a significant issue for the tourism and visitor economy sector across the country. An analysis of the available data has taken place as far as is possible within these limitations and this has also been used to inform the strategy.
- 4.3 The Visitor Economy Strategy for Barnsley sets out a broad vision and key priorities for the Council and its visitor economy sector partners to address. Coordinating activity across the sector will enable the Borough to realise the benefits from the development and growth of the visitor economy sector. The strategy links closely to the Borough's corporate priorities and approved Jobs and Business Plan, it also builds on initiatives and investment that have already been delivered across the Borough by the Council, funding agencies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and by sector partners.
- 4.4 The vision for the strategy is that by 2020 Barnsley will be recognised as an emerging tourism destination and be seen as a place worth visiting. We do need to be realistic about our offer, particularly in a highly competitive market, however by working together with our partners we can realise tangible benefits such as:
  - Increased money coming into the borough directly from visitor spend and from investment and funding streams
  - Business opportunities
  - Business profitability
  - Jobs at all skill levels including entry-level
  - Increased viability for our attractions and support for our arts , culture and heritage
  - Bigger and better profile for the borough which will help our image and reputation – and will help support inward investment
  - A sense of pride for our residents

4.5 To realise the potential of the visitor economy tourism in Barnsley will require two things delivered over a sustained period of time:

- Improvement and investment in the products and experiences offered
- Promotion of the place that is truthful and compelling.

4.6 The Tourism UK's model for investment to grow the visitor economy identifies that investment in one or more of the following four areas will grow the visitor economy most rapidly, the more sectors invested in the faster the growth:

- attractions,
- promotion
- events
- accommodation

Investment in the remaining sectors will support the growth of the visitor economy and encourage repeat visits:

- public realm
- food and drink
- customer service

Barnsley has already seen significant investment in its attractions, for example at Cannon Hall Farm, Experience Barnsley and the Cooper Gallery and further investment planned at Cannon Hall Museum Parks and Gardens, RSPB Old Moor and Elsecar. Significant investment has taken place in the Town Centre and in public realm and a Public Art Strategy for the borough has been developed. Barnsley has already realised benefits from this investment, such as increased visitor numbers and corresponding economic impact, increased publicity, improved perceptions and increased civic pride. Public Art in particular has had a significant impact in raising the profile and changing perceptions of the Borough, with Barnsley winning a National Civic Trust Award for its Somme Artwork. Significant investment and development in the Town Centre will address a major weakness in Barnsley's visitor offer, in particular stimulating the evening economy. The Council and its partners have also had success with events and exhibitions, which at the local level drive footfall to the town centre and visitor attractions. Higher profile events such as Tour de Yorkshire and the Picasso Exhibition also raise the profile and improve perceptions of the borough.

4.6 A review of the available data and evidence has identified the following:

- Tourism is a big and growing business regionally and nationally
- Day trips are the biggest sector - an opportunity now
- Domestic short breaks for leisure are a longer term opportunity

- Barnsley's location means it is well placed for day trips for those coming from home and those holidaying in the Peak District and Yorkshire – a great day out
  - History, heritage and culture are all important motivators and Barnsley's museums and attractions are already performing well above national and regional trends
  - What Barnsley has to offer is likely to appeal to older visitors i.e. people with time and money, interested in a meaningful experience, there is also reasonable offer for families
- 4.7 The Borough's main strength and opportunities lie with its heritage assets. Research done by Visit Britain and Visit England suggests that culture and heritage are big motivators for visitors on holiday, on a short break or on a day out. Research also suggests that people are looking for things to do on their break or day out so visitor attractions are a really important element of the tourism experience. So while Barnsley may not yet be front of mind for a break we can definitely already offer something based on our existing attractions and build on this strength.
- 4.8 Elsecar, represents the most realistic prospect for development of a tourism product, especially when linked to the proposed development of Wentworth Woodhouse. The restoration of the Newcomen often described as the most important piece of industrial heritage in the world, recent Heritage Action Zone recognition and Great Place status, proposed future investment and detailed destination management planning on both of these sites serve to support this premise.
- 4.9 The Borough is 75% Green Belt and is home to stunning landscapes and countryside, which is also a priority for visitors. To change outdated perceptions of the Borough it is important to utilise and promote these natural assets and build on existing strengths such as our flagship parks at Elsecar and Locke Park, the Trans Pennine Trail, RSPB Old Moor and the emerging concept proposals by Yorkshire Water for Langsett, Underbank and surrounding areas, in the borough or on its adjacent borders. As well as helping to change outdated perceptions of Barnsley as predominantly a post-industrial landscape, national level data demonstrates that recreational activity also has significant potential for economic impact and is a driver for day visits and overnight stays. Televised events with an international reach such as the Tour de Yorkshire are successful in raising the profile and improving perceptions of the borough and present an opportunity to showcase the borough's beautiful countryside.
- 4.10 The strategy sets out the links to national, regional and local level policy and strategic documents. This forms the basis for the development of an action plan which can be delivered in partnership and by coordinating and utilising existing resources to ensure a clear focus on raising the profile of the borough and delivering key strategic actions outlined in the action plan.

4.11 An outline action plan has been developed as part of this strategy which will be developed into a detailed action plan for delivery by the Visitor Economy Forum. The action plan identifies four priority areas:

- Partnerships: - recognising that we need to work together to get results
- Investment: - providing high quality and distinctive experiences for visitors
- Promotion: – telling visitors and potential visitors about the offer
- Intelligence gathering:- improving data and evidence across the sector

## 5 **Consideration of Alternative Approaches**

5.1 The alternative approach is to not have a Visitor Economy Strategy which would result in an uncoordinated approach to delivering the tangible benefits of a coordinated Visitor Economy Strategy delivered in partnership across the borough. This approach is not consistent with the aims of Future Council and the Authority's approved Jobs and Business Plan

## 6 **Implications for Local People / Service Users**

6.1 Approximately 60% of visitors to Barnsley's attractions are local people, with millions visiting each year. Adopting the strategy and taking a coordinated partnership approach to investment and development of our visitor attractions will improve the offer for local people and ensure its sustainability.

6.2 Where significant developments and investment takes place at visitor attractions in the future the needs and impact on local people will be considered and as key stakeholders local people will be involved in development plans.

## 7. **Financial Implications**

7.1 Consultation on the financial implications has taken place with colleagues in Financial Services on behalf of the Service Director – Finance (S151)

7.2 There will be no additional financial implications arising directly from this report. Implementation of the strategy will serve to refocus priorities and target existing resources at them.

7.3 Any financial implications associated with any of the headline priority actions identified will be the subject of further cabinet reports as required with any funding requirement needing to be identified initially from other sources than the Council's Core Resource.

**8. Employee Implications**

No implications

**9. Communications Implications**

9.1 Marketing and promotion is central to this strategy in terms of increasing visitor numbers to attractions and events and also changing and improving perceptions of Barnsley. Promotion has been identified as a key theme in the strategy's outline action plan

9.2 Communications team employees are embedded within the Culture and Visitor Economy and Economic Development Services, providing a dedicated resource to promote our Visitor attractions, events and the Town Centre as well as providing a link with our recognised Destination Management Organisation, Visit Barnsley CIC.

**10 Consultations**

10.1 Consultation has been carried out with internal and external stakeholders in the development of this strategy including:

- Barnsley Visitor Economy Forum
- Visit Barnsley CIC
- Barnsley Economic Partnership – Visitor Economy Sub Group
- South Yorkshire Local Authority visitor economy sector leads
- Welcome to Yorkshire

10.2 Visitor economy attractions and sector businesses are located in a number of wards across the borough and necessarily there is greater involvement from local Members in these areas. Local Members are kept informed of implications and developments at each of these attractions as necessary and are involved on stakeholder groups for associated major projects, for example Parks for People at Cannon Hall and projects at Elsecar.

**11 Community Strategy and the Council's Performance Management Framework**

11.1 Strengthening the Visitor Economy is priority outcome in the Corporate Plan contributing to the Council's ambition for a Thriving and Vibrant Economy and is recognised as priority area for development in the Council's Jobs and Business Plan

**12 Promoting Equality and Diversity and Social Inclusion**

12.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken in the development of this strategy and an action plan being incorporated into the strategy, so that the strategy remains inclusive.

### **13. Risk Management Issues, including Health and Safety**

- 13.1 The fundamental risk associated with this report is that if it is not approved, there will be the potential for an ineffective and un-coordinated approach in the visitor economy sector across the borough. This could result in Barnsley failing to realise the tangible benefits associated with growing the visitor economy including missed opportunities for investment.

The Culture and Visitor Economy Service benefits from a detailed risk register, which includes a number of risks that are essentially underpinned by the approval of this report. By approving the Council's Visitor Economy strategy, the service will be in a position to implement mitigation actions that arise from the strategy which have been designed to reduce the threats and risk to the successful delivery of the strategy itself.

### **14. List of Appendices**

- 14.1 Appendix 1 – Diagram Tourism UK model for Developing the Visitor Economy  
Appendix 2 - Draft Visitor Economy Strategy for Barnsley 2017-2020

### **15. Background Papers**

- 15.1 Yorkshire and Humber Visitor Economy Strategy 2015-2020  
Summary Visit England / Visit Britain research insights data Tourism Markets and Trends – Blue Sail  
Background papers are available from Sue Thiedeman Head of Culture and Visitor Economy  
Recronomics: The impact of outdoor recreation in the UK  
Creative England : Quantifying Film and Television Tourism in England  
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<b>Officer Contact: Sue Thiedeman   Telephone No: 01226 787506</b> <b>Date: 14.8.17</b>
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*If an Appendix A is not required, please include the box below:*

Financial Implications/Consultations : ..... Date : .....
Consultations on the financial implications have taken place with representatives of the Executive Director of Finance.