

**Report of the Executive Director Core Services  
and the Executive Director Place,  
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)  
on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

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

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This report provides an overview of the Visitor Economy Strategy for Barnsley 2017-2020 (Item 4b – attached) which was approved by Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The purpose of the strategy is to enable the Borough to realise tangible benefits, including an enhanced profile for the Borough; increased visitor spend; increased viability of attractions and visitor economy sector business; job creation; investment and an enhanced sense of pride in the borough for Barnsley residents.

**2.0 Background**

2.1 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.

2.2 Regionally there is a network of recognised Destination Management Organisations across the country that take on responsibility for promoting their particular areas, for example Visit Derbyshire or Visit Cambridge. Visit Barnsley has been constituted as a Community Interest Company and although very small scale, it provides a self-financing, independent platform to promote Barnsley on. It 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.

2.3 Welcome to Yorkshire is a regional organisation which has developed out of the Yorkshire Tourist Board. Their aim is to 'grow the county's visitor economy' and its main focus is public relations and promotion. It has been very successful in building a strong and recognisable brand for Yorkshire and has used events such as the Tour de Yorkshire to raise Yorkshire's profile on the international stage. Barnsley is currently a member of Welcome to Yorkshire, paying an annual subscription of £15,000 plus extra costs for inclusion in advertising campaigns. In addition, attractions within the Borough also have to be independent members of Welcome to Yorkshire to receive these benefits; these fees are typically a few hundred pounds.

2.4 Although the Sheffield City Region does not cite tourism and the visitor economy in its strategic priorities, South Yorkshire Chief Executives have expressed an interest in raising culture and the visitor economy up this agenda. This could be done as part of the current Strategic Economic Plan refresh process and the Chief Executive Officer of the Peak District National Park is currently leading a task and finish group on South Yorkshire tourism, which Barnsley is participating in.

**3.0 Current Position**

3.1 In 2015, Tourism UK produced a strategy for the development of the visitor economy in Yorkshire and Humber. Although the strategy was not implemented as intended, it served to inform individual councils. This document has been considered in the

development of the strategy for Barnsley, in particular the model for investment to grow the visitor economy as shown in Item 4b Appendix 1 – attached.

- 3.2 Barnsley is atypical in that its main stock of visitor attractions are predominantly either owned or supported by the Council through grants. In addition, there is one significant attraction (RSPB Old Moor) within the charitable sector and another substantial visitor attraction (Cannon Hall Farm) within the private sector. This means that the Council has an unusually high stake in this sector.
- 3.3 The strategy sets out a broad vision and key priorities for the Council and its visitor economy sector partners to address. It is envisaged that by co-ordinating activity across the sector, by 2020 the borough will realise tangible benefits from the development and growth of the visitor economy sector.
- 3.4 To realise the potential of the visitor economy in Barnsley, over a sustained period of time the strategy aims to enable improvement and investment in the products and experiences offered as well as delivering a promotion of the place that is truthful and compelling.
- 3.5 The strategy makes use of data and evidence from Visit Britain and Visit England Insight, where relevant, to identify where activity should be targeted and to enable effective monitoring of progress. However, there is very limited regional and local level data, which is a significant issue for the tourism and visitor economy sector across the country.
- 3.6 The strategy is currently being finalised and illustrative case studies are being developed which demonstrate the strategy's links and impact on other key strategies such as the Jobs and Business Growth Plan.

#### **4.0 Invited Witnesses**

- 4.1 At today's meeting, the following representatives have been invited to answer questions regarding this area of work:
  - Phillip Spurr, Service Director, Culture, Housing & Regulation
  - Sue Thiedeman, Head of Culture and Visitor Economy
  - Lynn Dunning, Group Leader - Arts & Heritage
  - Devinia Skirrow, Communications & Marketing Business Partner
  - Matthew Mitchell, Arts & Events Manager
  - Paul Clifford, Place Directorate Business Change Manager
  - Councillor Roy Miller, Cabinet Spokesperson Place Directorate

#### **5.0 Possible Areas for Investigation**

- 5.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:
  - What will be the biggest challenges in achieving the aims of the strategy and how will these be mitigated?
  - What return on investment is expected from the outcomes of the strategy and does being a member of Welcome to Yorkshire provide good value for money?

- Given that there is limited local data, with the exception of footfall figures, how will you measure the success of the strategy and how will you know if you are providing quality services?
- How do you plan to engage partners within the private and charitable sectors?
- What is being done to ensure there is appropriate infrastructure in place for visitor attractions such as road networks, public transport access, parking facilities, bike storage facilities?
- What is in place to ensure visitors are safe during visits to attractions and at large scale events?
- How will you ensure equal access to sites and events, for example for those with disabilities or where English is not their first language?
- What are the key plans to help change outdated perceptions of Barnsley being a predominantly post-industrial landscape?
- What links are there with neighbouring authorities to promote Barnsley as a place to visit?
- What actions could be taken by Members to support the visitor economy in Barnsley?

## **6.0 Background Papers and Useful Links**

- Visitor Economy Strategy for Barnsley 2017-2020 (Item 4b – attached)
- Welcome to Yorkshire Official Website:  
<https://www.yorkshire.com/>

## **7.0 Officer Contact**

- Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officer (01226 775794)
- Sue Thiedeman, Head of Culture and Visitor Economy, (01226 787506)

18<sup>th</sup> September 2017