
TOURISM REVIEW GROUP – FINAL REPORT

Responsible Cabinet Member(s) – Councillor D.A. Lyonette
Responsible Director(s) – John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment

Purpose of Report

1. To report the Environment Scrutiny Committee recommendations in relation to how the tourism strategy could be improved in the light of regeneration.

Information and Analysis

2. The Environment Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 1st July, 2004 established a Review Group to consider how the Tourism Strategy could be improved within the Borough of Darlington.
3. The detailed findings of the Group are outlined in the attached report (**Appendix 1**).
4. The Environment Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 28th April, 2005, accepted and endorsed the recommendations of the Review Group and agreed to forward the following conclusions to Cabinet :-
 - (a) To ensure that the impact on the economy that tourism currently has continues, it is imperative that tourism becomes a central concern of the Corporate Management Team in co-operation with the private sector.
 - (b) Communications between the relevant Departments would ensure the further development of the tourism product.
 - (c) The contribution to the economy that tourism can make is hard to over-estimate. Further investment by the Council would be justified, since tourism already contributes more than £70 million to the local economy.

Director's Comments

5. This report reinforces the approach the Council has taken towards tourism, whilst also providing a comprehensive overview of the importance and significance of tourism to the Darlington economy. The Council has consistently provided resources via the Development and Environment Department to enable Darlington to be promoted as destination to a variety of tourism markets. The report recognises the importance of, where possible, maintaining or enhancing the current levels of tourism activity within Council and their subsequent impact on the economy.
6. The action plan attached to the report contains a range of suggested and existing activities which can helpfully be carried forward.

7. In relation to the specific recommendations in paragraph 4 above:
- (a) In both policy and organisational structure, the economic importance of tourism is recognised and given high priority. The economy is the highest priority issue in the Community Strategy, and tourism plays an important part in the Economic Regeneration Strategy which takes forward the Community Strategy's Economy theme. In organisational terms, by situating the Tourism Team within my Department's Economic Regeneration and Tourism Section they are best placed to ensure that tourism related issues are considered throughout the Section and the Council. That Section also includes the Corporate External Funding Team, Town Centre and Business Support Team, enabling tourism to make the most of funding opportunities and of the Council's contact with businesses. For Darlington Partnership, tourism sits with the private sector-led Economy and Environment Group. It is therefore felt that the current management and policy structures allow CMT to ensure appropriate priority and contact with the private sector is given to tourism functions.
 - (b) The recommendations in the action plan are accepted. Much corporate working across departments is already taking place, for example the work to produce a single corporate events schedule for Darlington initiated by the Tourism Team.
 - (c) Opportunities for additional investment in Tourism are continually being sought, particularly through regional and sub-regional economic regeneration, heritage, cultural and other funding streams. The active work that is currently being undertaken by the Department in relation to emerging new regional tourism structures is important to ensure that Darlington is well placed in strategies and organisations to win funding and marketing in the future. In relation to Council funding, this needs to be considered against competing priorities through the Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme.

Legal Implications

8. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

9. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

10. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

Decision Deadline

11. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that :-

- (a) Cabinet endorse the Tourism Review Group Final Report.
- (b) Approval be given to the adoption of the Action Plan.
- (c) The comments of Cabinet be referred back to the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Reasons

13. The recommendations are supported to enable the views of Cabinet to be sought and referred back to the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

**John Buxton,
Director of Development and Environment**

Background Papers

There were no background papers used other than those referred to in the report.

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