

Meeting Date: 8th September 2020

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Culture, Heritage & Leisure Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Stephen Higgs**

TOURISM / DISCOVER CARLISLE

The Discover Carlisle Team are continuing to support the re-opening of the High Street. The City Centre Officer has been working with colleagues to support retailers by providing advice and assistance on COVID safe measures, and by managing the revised Pavement Café Licence process.

A series of new promotional videos have been launched. These include a destination video, re-opening of retail video, re-opening of hospitality video and re-opening of attractions videos. Since their launch they have reached 125,098 people, they have generated 416 reactions and have been shared 339 times.

The first Farmers' Market was held again on 1st August with Covid secure measures in place.

The Tourist Information Centre has re-opened, and there has been a significant level of demand from visitors seeking help planning their visit in person, by telephone and by online enquiry.

The Discover Carlisle Team continue to liaise with counterparts in the other Cumbrian Districts as well as Cumbria Tourism. Industry research has shown that current predictions are for a loss of 23 million visits which is a reduction of 49% and a loss of 32 million tourist days, a reduction of 51%. Only 29% of tourism businesses in the County have fully re-opened and 19% of tourism businesses haven't re-opened at all. The District Councils in partnership with Cumbria Tourism and Cumbria LEP are putting in place plans to support the industry with an enhanced marketing campaign which includes video advertising, and plans are being made for TV advertising.

CULTURE AND EVENTS

Events where it is not possible to implement social distancing measures have been cancelled. However, it is important that we give visitors and locals more reasons to come into Carlisle and in particular the City Centre. Plans are being made to host a City of Lights event in February 2021. It is hoped that the event will stimulate the local economy. Last year the event contributed £166,000 to the local economy over 3 days.

Talkin Tarn held two sell-out outdoor theatre events with performances from the Pantoons of 'Sherlock Holmes' and 'Twelfth Night'. All the social distancing regulations were adhered to with appropriate spacing amongst all attending, tickets were limited to 100 to manage social distancing etc. Feedback from the audience members has been very positive.

Cultural Strategy for Carlisle

We have been working as part of the Carlisle Cultural Consortium to develop a Strategic Framework for Culture within the District, through cultural leadership and enterprise, cultural destination and place-making, community wellbeing, children and life-long learning.

The Cultural Consortium is made up of Carlisle City Council, Prism Arts, Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust and the University of Cumbria.

Following wide consultation via a series of workshops in 2019, and a pause during the Covid Pandemic, the Strategy is currently being reviewed by the partnership and will be published later this year.

LEISURE SERVICES

Sands Centre/Newman Leisure

Our Leisure provider, GLL, has moved into the ex-Newman School site for gym and fitness classes and in line with Government guidance opened their doors to customers on the 25th July. The temporary site, as part of The Sands Centre redevelopment, has been positively received by customers with 3,000 visits in the first three and a half weeks.

The Pools

The Pools opened on the 1st August and had nearly 1,300 visits in the first two and a half weeks. On top of these figures the Swimming Clubs have also been using the Pools on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Sheepmount Athletics and Football

The Sheepmount Athletics track has reopened to Clubs and the Team are busy getting the football pitches ready for the season.

CUMBRIA'S MUSEUM OF MILITARY LIFE

We are now open seven days a week, working closely with English Heritage to ensure visitor safety. We continue to operate with minimal staffing using the Job Retention Scheme to maximise income. This is limiting what we are able to do on a day-to-day basis.

We marked the 75th anniversary of VJ day with an external exhibition (which continues until 31st August) and a small event on 15th August which was attended by the Mayor and her Consort.

TULLIE HOUSE

The reopening of the Museum has been very well received by visitors. Although our overall footfall is around 40% of last year's (higher than predicted) our admissions figures are roughly at the 30% industry standard we have been advised to predict. We are hopeful that, with the re-introduction of Covid-safe family activities in the second half of August, visitor numbers will increase.