



# **ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

## ***Panel Report***

**Public**

**Date of Meeting:** 5th April 2012

**Title:** TOURISM REPORT

**Report of:** The Director of Economic Development

**Report reference:** ED.16/12

### **Summary:**

This Report seeks to update Members of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel on the action currently being undertaken in relation to Tourism.

### **Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:**

### **Recommendations:**

Members are asked to note the contents of the Report and raise any relevant questions with the Director of Portfolio Holder.

**Contact Officer:** Jane Meek

**Ext:** 7190

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

## **1. Background**

1.1 As an attractive historic city tourism has always played an important role in the economy of the area. In 2009 the City Council together with Cumbria Tourism, Hadrian's Wall Heritage and NWDA agreed to establish a Tourism Partnership for Carlisle and North Cumbria which aimed to improve the tourism product further and grow the industry locally.

1.2 In addition it was considered that a partnership would enable resources to be maximised and work more effectively. Consequently each of the partner agencies contributed staff resources and the City Council's tourism team were seconded to the partnership and a Board was established made up of public and private sector representatives.

1.3 The economic downturn, the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies and the subsequent loss of funding to key partners resulted in a withdrawal of resources from the Partnership and a need for the Council to take stock and re-assess how it can best support tourism in the area with the resources available.

1.4 In addition linked to this were the proposals for the Old Town Hall which following the failure of the Heritage Lottery Fund application need to be reviewed.

1.5 The action currently being undertaken involves a number of separate but inter-related areas and covers the City Council's Tourism Service, the Old Town Hall and Carlisle Tourism. The overarching principle is that any outcomes should provide the right conditions to support a thriving visitor economy, modern, fit for purpose and within the resources available.

## **2. Tourism Service**

2.1 This involves a full service review including the Tourist Information Centres in Carlisle and Brampton, Marketing and Branding, Events and the use of technology. The review includes contributions from across the Council including ITC, Property and Finance and will look at best practice across other tourism service providers.

2.2 In addition as part of the review a pilot project is currently being undertaken at Brampton Tourist Information Centre which involves the Parish Council running the TIC with volunteers.

2.3 Marketing and Branding is a key issue for Carlisle and the Tourism Partnership. The "Discover Carlisle" brand has been extremely successful and the Council together with Carlisle Economic Partnership are looking at ways to use the brand across all sectors of the economy and as part of the "growth" agenda.

2.4 In addition the review is looking at Events and how events should be managed in the future particularly partnership working with external parties such as the Business Improvement District.

2.5 The initial Surveys and baseline information will be completed by the end of March and an implementation programme will be developed.

### **3. The Old Town Hall**

3.1 The Old Town Hall is a significant building both in terms of its history and its position in the centre of Carlisle. The Executive at its meeting in March approved a substantial scheme of works to the Old Town Hall to help secure the fabric of the building in the short to medium term.

3.2 The capital cost of the approved scheme totals £428,656 with funding coming from English Heritage (£132,617) and the City Council (£296,039). The funding from English Heritage is part of a wider PSICA (Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas) programme covering a number of important historic buildings and structures within the City Council Conservation Area and is only available until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

3.3 The works are programmed to take place between September and February 2013 and include structural repairs and upgrading the internal fabric.

### **4. Carlisle Tourism Partnership Board**

4.1 The Board was set up when Carlisle Tourism Partnership was established and consists of both private and public sector representatives. Following the loss of resources and in view of the Tourism Service Review it is necessary to review the role of the Board and consider how Tourism can be best supported. Tourism is highly diverse with a large number of businesses and as a consequence of this there are a variety of bodies and organisations that exist to promote tourism. There is a role for a public/private partnership which could bring these together.

### **5. Conclusion**

5.1 Tourism is very important to the economy of Carlisle and the work currently being undertaken will lead to a modern service which will help support it in the future.

**Impact assessments**

**Does the change have an impact on the following?**

Equality Impact Screening	Impact Yes/No?	Is the impact positive or negative?
Does the policy/service impact on the following?	<b>No</b>	
Age	<b>No</b>	
Disability	<b>No</b>	
Race	<b>No</b>	
Gender/ Transgender	<b>No</b>	
Sexual Orientation	<b>No</b>	
Religion or belief	<b>No</b>	
Human Rights	<b>No</b>	
Health inequalities	<b>No</b>	
Rurality	<b>No</b>	

**If you consider there is either no impact or no negative impact, please give reasons:**

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**If an equality Impact is necessary, please contact the P&P team.**