

CABINET

Approval of the Tourism Strategy Update, 2008

9th December 2008

Report of Head of Economic Development and Tourism

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
The purpose of the report is to seek formal approval of the Tourism Strategy Update, 2008, document and its publication on the website.			
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Officer Referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Date Included in Forward Plan	Not applicable		
This report is public			

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) To approve the Tourism Strategy Update, 2008, document and its publication on the website.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The City Council's Tourism Strategy for 2006 – 2010 was approved in June 2006, following extensive public consultation. Section 6 of the Strategy states that a formal review will be undertaken at its mid point in 2008. This has been completed and the Tourism Strategy Update report has been discussed at the Q1 PRT meeting on 30th July, 2008. The Tourism Strategy remains valid until 2010.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The Tourism Strategy Update document.

The Update document retains the objectives of the approved Tourism Strategy and summarises the progress which has been made over the past two years. In Appendix 3 of the Tourism Strategy, the value and volume of tourism statistics for the district have been given but more recent figures have been reported in the Update document.

The major part of the Tourism Strategy Update is the Action Plan. This has been taken from the Strategy and updated. The main change to the action plan has been to add a column to show any new information or targets, e.g. the coastal defence is

now shown as complete and that item can be removed from the new strategy in 2010. Other examples include reference to progress on the Winter Gardens, on the Lancaster VIC in The Storey and on Lancaster's heritage offer (resulting from the work of the heritage group set up through the Vision Board).

The target of 5% annual growth in tourism spending in the district has been changed to +1% in order to more accurately reflect the economic situation. The only other financial target changed is the revision of 10% increase in income through the accommodation booking hot line to +5% annually, again reflecting current trends. Other ways of making income to offset this national downturn in bookings through TICs are being examined.

It is intended that the Tourism Strategy will continue to be implemented within existing budgets.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 Discussed within the Service, with other related Services and with relevant Cabinet Members.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1 Option 1 - Do nothing. Failure to publish an Update Report would be contrary to the approved strategy. Some members and private sector partners may question why one has not been published.

4.2 Option 2 - Amend the Tourism Strategy Update. The report has already undergone a number of revisions and was discussed at the Q1 PRT meeting. Further revisions would delay the publication unless they were minor ones.

4.3 Option 3 - Approve the Tourism Strategy Update document and publish it on the website. This can also be used for positive publicity for the City Council.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 The preferred option is Option 3 as relevant members have seen the current Update and no further revisions have been requested. A publicity story can then be produced and the Update published on the website. It is not proposed to publish a paper version of the Tourism Strategy Update document.

6.0 Conclusion

It is recommended that the Tourism Strategy Update, 2008, is approved and published. This can act as a basis of discussions with the LSP and lead towards the writing of a new Tourism Strategy for the district in 2010.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

"A Tourism Strategy for Morecambe, Lancaster and the Lune Valley, 2006 – 2010", approved in June, 2006.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. As highlighted above, it is the intention that its implementation will continue to be in line with existing budgets.

With regard to the reduction in anticipated TIC income through the accommodation booking hotline, an adjustment has already been made to reflect the current trend of more customers booking direct via hotels' websites. This is on the basis that any shortfall can be offset by additional TIC income through affiliate sites and on-line merchandising. These two methods, although explored, are not yet currently used to their full potential. It will be necessary, in due course, to re-appraise the future arrangements regarding accommodation booking to ensure their ongoing cost-effectiveness.

The updated Strategy also includes a small number of specific targets that could, potentially, have financial implications arising. Examples include the THI Scheme, and the possibility of seven day opening at Morecambe VIC. With regard to the latter, this is in the early stages and may be piloted during the Spring months of 2009. Further information is required in order to appraise its cost effectiveness, prior to taking any decision to implement.

Ultimately, any Strategy targets that have financial implications outside of the approved budget would be reported to Cabinet, for consideration as appropriate.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Tourism Strategy Update (2008) document

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