

## **REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

### **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY UPDATE**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report updates Policy Committee on the Council's approach to support the Visitor Economy and the proposed place-based strategy and emerging themes to grow Nottinghamshire's Visitor Economy.

#### **Information**

2. The Visitor Economy is a key economic and employment sector in the county and within the wider D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area. Furthermore, the county's natural capital, events, assets and services are recognised as a key determinant of the quality of life of the county's residents and together they shape the understanding and uniqueness of the county's sense of place and the communities it serves.
3. The sector is estimated to support 15,000 jobs in Nottinghamshire and performs well in attracting day visitors (which comprised 90% of all trips in 2016) but there are barriers to maximising the economic benefits of increasing visitors to the county and to optimising local spend and overnight stays.
4. Policy Committee previously approved funding for a Strategy to grow Nottinghamshire's Visitor Economy - harnessing opportunities and taking into account changes in key relationships including the end of the Council's financial support to Marketing NG, the Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) for Nottinghamshire and Nottingham.
5. This Strategy is seen as vital to growing tourism by volume and value - and to attract further private and public investment to deliver a unique, defined and sustainable tourism offer for Nottinghamshire in line with the '**Your Nottinghamshire, Your Future**' Council Plan. Accordingly, the Place Strategy is also a key reference point for the Strategy in its recognition of the importance of "place" and that: *"Nottinghamshire has a great many strengths, including a wonderful heritage and countryside, some of the best market towns and villages in the country, good living standards and world class sport..."*

#### **Progress and Approach**

6. An internal cross-council Visitor Economy Steering Group has been established and this has set the brief for the work and managed the process. In April 2018, Blue Sail was appointed as a leading destination consultancy specialising in tourism development, management and

marketing. Blue Sail is also being supported by Regeneris in developing the current and future potential value of the sector to the local economy.

7. A 4-stage approach to the work has included evidence gathering, an audit of the Visitor Economy assets, a strategic review of opportunities and target markets and will culminate in the final stage of setting the aspiration, rationale and recommended actions. Each component has been based on robust consultation, analysis and assessment.

## **Key Findings to date**

8. The first draft of the strategy captures the focus and priorities of the place and sets out where the County Council can have greatest impact through leadership and delivery against its own priorities and assets over the next 3 to 5 years. It also responds in the context of emerging tourism trends including digital opportunities, growth in personalised experiences and local culture as well as an increase in the demand for active holidays and short breaks.
9. The main “hook” to the Strategy is around Sherwood and “Free Thinking”. This builds physically on the home of Robin Hood and the corresponding international recognition of the legend as well as the story and the free thinking of Nottinghamshire “rebels, disrupters and legends” building out from Robin Hood to the Civil War and Mayflower Pilgrims. The Strategy then identifies ways in which the County Council can add value and catalyse activity and collaboration through leadership and facilitation. A “Strategy on a Page” document is appended to this report for further information.
10. Focusing on the Council’s assets some key opportunities include to:

### Develop Key Investment Hooks around County Council Assets including:

- a. “A must see hub” focused on Edwinstowe supporting future growth around the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre
- b. Holme Pierrepont as a hub of sporting adventure activities and
- c. A differentiated heritage experience around Rufford – complimenting that of Sherwood

### Respond to Emerging Opportunities to develop an offer around:

- d. Off road walking and cycling - themed and linked to Robin Hood
- e. Strengthened sense of place and range of attractions round the A614 corridor and
- f. Collaborations with Derbyshire to develop tourism cycling opportunities and Leicestershire for sporting events.

### Create focal Points in the Calendar:

- g. Various events and festivals are suggested including grouping events into, for example, a “Sherwood Season” and exploring the potential for a signature event – unique to the County and potentially aligned to Mayflower 400 but with ongoing legacy

### Facilitate Growth by ensuring Visitors have a range of places to stay

- h. Build on the D2N2 Accommodation Strategy, to grow short breaks and tailor to the needs of target audiences

### Develop Nottinghamshire’s Visitor Economy Business and Community Engagement Base

- i. To build commercial expertise and capacity to use digital media effectively, develop on line bookable product to drive visitor numbers and maximise the quality and development of the county's "visitor offer" and
- j. To create businesses and local people as advocates for the county – engaged in their place and able to celebrate its stories and attractions.

## **Growth Market Opportunities for Nottinghamshire**

- 11. Two primary markets (as recognised by Visit England) have been identified by Blue Sail:
  - a. "Country loving traditionalists" – so called empty nesters with traditional values seeking countryside breaks in good quality accommodation and
  - b. "Active Family Fun seekers"- typically information hungry families who live in cities and are seeking active, family friendly pursuits including sport/events/festivals etc.
- 12. There are additional opportunities via the forthcoming 2020 400<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the sailing of the Mayflower to help capitalise on international tourism via the US and domestic market.

## **Next Steps**

- 13. The next steps to developing the Visitor Economy Strategy with Blue Sail include;
  - a. To build upon and test the emerging findings outlined in this report and consult and engage partners and the sector.
  - b. To develop the economic case for prioritising the sector and set targets for future growth and
  - c. To develop regional impact and connectivity with City and County Councils in the East Midlands
- 14. Actions A – C above will then generate an internal Action Plan supported by a series of detailed Topic Papers and the publication of a public facing Strategy for the County Council.
- 15. It is the intention to then launch the Council's Strategy at a Visitor Economy Summit to other partners and stakeholders later in 2018 with a view to the document helping support and guide collaborative partnership approaches to grow the sector going forward.
- 16. The service will now work with Blue Sail to finalise the content of the Strategy, building on the aforementioned themes and target audiences and once completed bring the final Strategy back to Committee for approval.

## **Other Options Considered**

- 17. The potential value and importance of the sector presents a growth opportunity for the county but to maximise benefits also requires guidance and investment prioritisation. On this basis the need for a Strategy was agreed.
- 18. In terms of the approach to complete the Strategy to deliver the Council's aspirations, all stages of the process have been informed by a multi-disciplinary approach drawn from the cross-council working group. However to now deliver a final product a rationalised view and oversight is required that enables prioritised actions and appropriate resourcing.

## **Reason for Recommendation**

19. As a countywide Strategy would directly contribute to the **Your Nottinghamshire, Your Future** commitment of 'Nottinghamshire being a great place to live, work, visit and relax', it is logical for the County Council to take the lead role on facilitating growth in the visitor economy sector - through its investments, use of assets and leadership.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Implications**

21. The costs for developing the Visitor Economy Strategy are being met from existing allocations from within the Growth and Economic Development budget for 2018/19. Any financial implications generated from the recommendation of the finalised Strategy will be met from a combination of savings generated by the withdrawal of funding support to Marketing NG, a review of existing budgets and bids for external resources.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Policy Committee agrees:

- 1) The emerging themes of the Council's Strategy to grow Nottinghamshire Visitor economy.
- 2) That the final Strategy be submitted to a future meeting of the Policy Committee for approval.

**COUNCILLOR MRS KAY CUTTS, MBE**  
**Leader of the Council**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:** Nicola M<sup>c</sup>Coy-Brown, Growth and Economic Development, 0115 9772580

## **Constitutional Comments (SLB 15/08/2018)**

22. Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

## **Financial Comments [CSB 23/08/2018]**

23. The financial implications are contained in paragraph 21 of the report.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All