

Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Building a Strong Economy

12 June 2006



Scrutiny Project – Tourism in County Durham

Report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny

Purpose of Report

- 1, To explain the attached report and executive summary about tourism in County Durham.

Background

2. Last year, the Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee decided to investigate tourism in County Durham. The development of County Durham's tourism industry was a key priority to help build a strong economy in County Durham.
3. A working group was formed and time was taken to visit stakeholders in the County Durham tourism economy to have a much deeper understanding about their views of tourism in County Durham. Discussions took place with representatives from Bowes Museum, Beamish Museum, One North East, the Chairman of the Area Tourism Partnership in County Durham as well as County Council officers and officers from the County Durham Development Company.
4. The attached report explains the evidence which has been considered as part of this investigation. An executive summary has also been produced which provides a more manageable explanation of the project and the recommendations which have been made.
5. The main recommendation, not surprisingly, relates to the new Area Tourism Partnership which has just been formed in County Durham. This partnership will be the key driver for tourism in County Durham in the future. The County Council is adjusting its support to tourism to meet the needs of the new partnership. The first recommendation, therefore, suggests that the County Council urgently needs to clarify its role and operation in relation to the Area Tourism Partnership. This includes determining the main markets, better co-ordination of support and publicity and monitoring and analysis to ensure that tourism, in fact, provides positive benefits for the County's economy.
6. Other recommendations are targeted at the County Council and suggest a more corporate and focused approach to tourism within the County Council to provide more effective support to the tourism industry. It is also

recommended that performance indicators should be developed so that the overall benefits (or disbenefits) can be assessed, the Strategic Vision should be revisited in relation to tourism and, if it can be demonstrated that tourism will be a highly skilled and appropriately remunerated industry, the Council should be looking to promote this opportunity for local employment and sustainable businesses.

7. The Scrutiny report is submitted for approval. It would then be reported to the main committee and Cabinet.

Recommendation

8. You are asked to consider and approve the working group's report.

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