



**SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE FOR
BUILDING A STRONG ECONOMY**

“Wish You Were Here?”



**A REVIEW OF TOURISM
IN COUNTY DURHAM**

MAY 2006

KEY TO FRONT SHEET PICTURES

	North of England Open Air Museum, Beamish	
Killhope Leadmine		East Durham Coast
High Force Staindrop	Durham Cathedral Durham City	Durham County Cricket Ground Chester-le-Street
	Bowes Museum Barnard Castle	

INTRODUCTION FROM COUNCILLOR RAY PYE CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKING GROUP



In the Council's 2005/6 Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan, the development of the Tourism industry in County Durham was one of the Council's priority aims to help build a strong economy. The County Council has been a keen supporter of tourism for many years. It was formally a key member of the Northumbria Tourist Board. New structures are now in place through the Area Tourism Partnership to seek to increase the pace of the development of tourism in the north east. The Area Tourism Partnership is still evolving.

This project was timed to seek to assist in the introduction of this new Partnership. We have spoken to people and organisations directly involved in the tourism industry and we have sought to increase our understanding of the current policy strategies.

Tourism, as the Council's Strategic Vision indicates, can provide great opportunities for County Durham. This, however, has to be balanced to ensure that there are overall benefits to the residents of County Durham. We would like to look forward to a situation where all jobs in the tourism industry were well-remunerated and highly skilled to provide a high-quality experience for visitors and also high-quality employment. This report suggests ways in which, in partnership, the County Council can contribute to this approach.

I would like to thank all the members of the working group and the officers and organisations who helped us in this project. One North East has told us that the tourist potential in the north east is significant. We hope that the County Council can work with the tourist industry to expand this industry for the overall benefit of residents in the County. This includes promoting the interests of those employed in the tourist industry and building a stronger economy in the County.

Members of the Scrutiny Working Group

Councillor Ray Pye (Chairman)

Councillors: Armstrong, Bowman, Carroll, Coates, Chapman, Cordon, Douthwaite, Gray, Marshall, Meir, Simmons, Southwell, Williams and Young.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This investigation has provided a deeper understanding of the key issues about the development of tourism in County Durham. The report is timely in that the Area Tourism Partnership is currently in its formative stages and there is an opportunity to influence the way in which the partnership develops.

Perhaps the key issues which have arisen from the evidence are:-

- One of the County Council's key priorities for improvement in the 2005/6 Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan to assist in building a strong economy in County Durham was to help build the tourism sector and, in particular, the value of the tourism sector in the County.
- Tourism is also reflected as a key challenge in the Strategic Vision. The aim is to increase the percentage of the workforce employed in tourism, increase the skill levels of employees, increase the amount of money people spend in the County and raise local and national awareness of the County's attractions.
- For the year 2006/7, tourism is no longer a priority area for the Council but is still an important factor in the County's economy.

Some Statistics – based on 2003 figures

- Durham County's share of the national tourism market is currently only 4%.
 - Nevertheless, tourism is worth an estimated £322m each year to Durham's economy
 - An estimated 17 million visitors come to County Durham each year but 15.7 million come only for one day and 1.3 million for over one day
 - Of those 1.3 million visitors who come to Durham for more than a day, the average length of stay of visitors is only 2.8 days with a total average spend of these visitors of £105.00.
 - The average spend by those who visit for one day is £11.70.
 - Approximately 70,000 visitors come to Durham each year from overseas.
 - Total employment is estimated to be 6,700 people directly and indirectly employed.
- Whilst tourism in this country continues to grow, our share of the world market is declining

- The North East does not compare well in terms of its market share nationally - only an estimated 4% of the total market
- OneNorthEast is now responsible for promoting tourism in the North East. They have increased publicity spending considerably although it is too early to tell how successful this has been
- There is significant enthusiasm locally that the potential share of the tourism market in County Durham can be significantly increased.
- As the Council's policies indicate, an increase in tourism needs to be pursued carefully to provide overall benefits to the County including ensuring that those who work in the tourist industry are appropriately trained and adequately remunerated.
- The development of tourism in County Durham also needs to be progressed sustainably. We need to ensure that we safeguard the attractions of the County on a long term basis and provide tourism growth which can continue into the foreseeable future.
- In speaking to stakeholders in the tourist industry there was a recognition that there needs to be an increase in the focus of both the public and private sector to further develop tourism in County Durham. There is a perceived need for better co-ordination and avoidance of duplication particularly in relation to publicity
- There is no overall strategy in relation to supporting and encouraging overseas visitors particularly those visitors who do not speak English
- A large number of publicity brochures is produced by the County Council but the overall strategy and the way in which these brochures co-ordinate with other publicity to promote tourism is not clear
- The County Council is refocusing its support to tourism and is no longer to produce the County Durham Holiday brochure
- The County Council needs to consider its overall support to the Area Tourism Partnership and the way it co-ordinates its tourism support within its various services and through the County Durham Development Company
- There is need for a more co-ordinated focus in the way in which the various County Council services promotes tourism.

Recommendations

The development of the tourist industry in County Durham was identified as a key aim in building a strong economy. This is no longer a priority for improvement but remains an important element of the County's economic strategies. This investigation has demonstrated that the North East still has a very modest share

of the national tourism industry. This is reflected in the position in County Durham. Durham City attracts significant numbers of tourists but this appears to be for day visits and the spend per tourist is estimated to be under £12. The Strategic Vision also looks to creating new tourism projects in coastal and western rural locations but few projects have yet been developed.

One NorthEast has significantly increased spending on the marketing of the North East under the 'Passionate People: Passionate Places' logo. It is too early to say whether this will have a significant impact on County Durham's tourism industry.

The Area Tourism Partnership has now just been formed and this Partnership will be the new vehicle for promoting tourism in County Durham.

In many respects, an increase in the tourism economy in County Durham is dependent upon the new regional and County approach. It is, therefore, perhaps timely that this report has reviewed the current position and can provide some considered views about the way forward. It is noted, however, that, in gathering evidence, the members of the working group have detected a degree of impatience within the tourist industry about the time taken to develop this new approach.

The following recommendations are made for consideration by Cabinet. Many are targeted particularly at the operation of the Area Tourism Partnership and the Council's approach to the Partnership.

The main recommendation is that:-

i. The County Council needs to urgently clarify its role and operation in relation to the Area Tourism Partnership.

In approaching this new relationship, the following issues have arisen in this investigation and, in our view, require consideration.

- Representatives from the tourist industry have pointed out the need for co-ordination and reduction of duplication in the provision of publicity material and support. There is a great deal of information available. It will be for the Partnership to provide advice to the Council about the most effective publicity and support.
- Tourism still has an image as a low-pay, low-skilled industry. If tourism is to assist in promoting the County's economy, there needs to be a move towards a higher-skilled and better remunerated workforce with a particular focus on promoting longer visits and 'repeat' visits.
- There needs to be further clarification of the main market which is to be expanded. Is it the number of day trips or extending the period of visits or both. The role of the overseas market and non-English speaking tourists also needs to be considered in more detail.

- The total spend of those visitors who stay more than one day and those who visit for one day is modest. There is a balance to be struck but the benefits of tourism need to be manifestly an overall benefit for County Durham's economy and an increase in spend to assist the local economy should be a key focus. It is suggested that the priority should be to increase tourism spend rather than simply attract more tourists.
- The possibilities of co-ordinating marketing of tourist attractions in Durham do not seem to be exploited to a great extent at the moment. In the past, marketing has been carried out involving a number of attractions. This is an area which perhaps should be pursued particularly using booking via a website.
- There does not seem to be any clear process of monitoring the success of OneNorthEast's new publicity campaign and the impact on County Durham. This must be a key to any long term strategy.

ii. **Performance indicators should be developed to assist the Council in assessing progress and the overall benefits of tourism to the Council.**

At the moment, there is no regular report to Councillors about the progress being made in relation to the development of tourism. It is understood that some performance indicators are being developed. It is important that appropriate information is provided including the trends in visitor numbers, their spend and length of stay, so that the overall benefits of tourism to the County can be assessed.

iii. **Consideration should be given to a transparent corporate approach to tourism within the County Council.**

The County Council currently has no regular Officer Working Group to seek to co-ordinate tourism issues across all the County Council services including the County Durham Development Company. The establishment of a structure to deliver this corporate aim should be considered.

iv. **The Strategic Vision should be revisited in relation to tourism issues.**

The Strategic Vision looks to creating new tourism projects in coastal and western rural locations but few projects have been developed. This, perhaps, needs to be revisited in the context of maximising the potential benefit to local communities as has been achieved, for example, by The Rose and Crown at Romaldkirk.

v. **On the basis that tourism will be a highly skilled and appropriately remunerated industry, the County Council should be promoting this as an opportunity for local employment and sustainable businesses.**

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As residents of County Durham, we all know about it is many attractions. The County has a rich, unique history and its own local character and diverse environments. People have visited County Durham to enjoy this experience for centuries. As a Council, we want to increase the tourism industry to assist the development of the County's economy.

The Strategic Vision for the County indicates that Challenge 1 is to:-

'create a tourism sector built around the potential offered by Durham City and create new tourism projects in coastal and western rural locations while protecting our distinctive beautiful environment so that the County is at the forefront of tourism development.'

- 1.2 The opportunity of a step-change in the contribution that tourism can make towards an economic revival within the County was recognised. Over the next five years, the aim is to increase the size of the workforce involved in tourism and their skill levels and also increase the number of tourists and the amount of money people spend in the County.
- 1.3 In line with the Strategic Vision, one of the Council's priorities in the Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan is to help build the tourist sector.

SECTION 2

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 2.1 This project has its aim to assist the Council in furthering the Strategic Vision and the Council's priority in relation to tourism. Accordingly, the Terms of Reference agreed for this project were:-

To review the current arrangements to create a strong tourism sector as envisaged in the Strategic Vision for County Durham, to consider the long-term benefits for residents in County Durham and to make any appropriate recommendations for improvement to achieve the aims of the Strategic Vision for tourism.

SECTION 3

POSITION STATEMENT

- 3.1 Bob Ward, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development with the County Council, gave an overview to the Scrutiny group about Tourism in County Durham in 2005.
- 3.2 He explained the County Durham context. In terms of statistics, the most reliable recent information came from 2003. The basic figures are set out below:-
- In 2003:-
- tourism was worth an estimated £322 million in County Durham
 - the estimated visitor numbers overall were 17 million of which 15.7 million came to the County for one day and 1.3 million stayed for longer than one day.
 - The average length of stay was 2.8 days
 - The average total spend was £105.
 - The average spend per day was £38.
 - The average spend per day visitor was £11.70.
 - Total employment was estimated to be 6,700 direct and indirect jobs involved in tourism in County Durham.
- 3.3 Bob explained that in 2003, One North East, Central Government's Regional Development Agency, assumed responsibility for the strategic development of tourism. One of the outcomes of this change in approach was that, on the 31st March 2004, the Northumbria Tourist Board, which was a partnership between local authorities and the private sector, was disbanded.
- 3.4 There were a large number of bodies involved in various roles and responsibilities relating to tourism. At a national level, there was an organisation known as Visit Britain which had a sub-structure called Visit England.
- 3.5 At regional level, One North East delivered the **North East Regional Tourism Strategy** and was involved in regional tourism delivery. At a local authority level, there was a **County Durham Tourism Strategy** which was delivered by County and District Councils. Within Durham County Council, a number of services were involved in tourism issues. In addition, there were other bodies involved including those dealing with the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Heritage Coast and other local initiatives such as Teesdale Marketing. Most importantly, tourism was delivered by both large and small providers in the public and private sectors.

SECTION 4

POLICIES

THE NATIONAL POSITION

Tomorrow's Tourism – Department for Culture, Media and Sport – A New Tourism Strategy 1999 (A Summary)

- 4.1 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport had set out a strategy for tourism in Britain up to 2010 in a document entitled "Tomorrow's Tourism in 1999".
- 4.2 In the Foreword by the Prime Minister he pointed out that
- "The challenge facing the country was to create a competitive, world-class tourism industry in Britain which matches both the quality and the best of British business generally. We must have a tourism industry which provides affordable quality which is open to all and which makes best use of Britain's resources. And a tourism industry which concentrates on our key resource. – people".***
- 4.3 The strategy makes it clear that Britain's tourism industry is large and growing. At that time, the tourism industry employed 1.75 million people in 125,000 businesses and accounted for one in six of all jobs created in the last ten years. Overall, the industry was worth £53 billion a year to the country.
- 4.4 Tourism was one of the biggest industries on the planet. World-wide international tourism receipts have grown by 12% over the preceding 10 years. Competition between countries for the tourists' pound would get ever more intense. British tourism continues to grow. Our international tourism receipts are the fourth largest in Europe and the fifth in the world but our share of the world market is declining.
- 4.5 A new challenging target for the British tourism industry was set which was to match, and exceed, the rate of global growth in the industry by the end of 2010. This was to be done in ways which are economically, socially and environmentally beneficial. The overall ambition was to help the industry turn itself from one perceived in the past as providing a low-wage, temporary form of employment with no career structure or proper training and, as a result was a low-quality product, into an industry that puts quality at the heart of everything it does.
- 4.6 Fifteen action points were at the core of the plan. They were:
- A blueprint for the sustainable development of tourism to safeguard our countryside, heritage and culture for future generations.

- Initiatives to widen access to tourism for the 40% of people who do not take a long holiday.
 - More money for a more focused and aggressive overseas promotion programme to bring in more overseas visitors.
 - New internet systems to deliver more worldwide tourist bookings for Britain and to provide information on attractions and travel options.
 - New computerised booking information services to make it easier for people to book accommodation and travel.
 - A major career's festival and image campaign to raise the profile and promote the image of careers in the hospitality industry.
 - A hospitality industry programme to sign up 500 employers to work towards initial Investors in People standard to help raise the quality of training in the industry.
 - A new strategic national body for England to provide leadership to the English tourism industry.
 - A new grading scheme for all hotels and guest houses.
 - New targets for the hotel development in London and a further £4.5m for marketing to exploit its potential as a premier location for business travellers and holiday-makers and as a gateway to Britain.
 - More integrated promotion of our wonderful cultural heritage and countryside attractions to enable visitors to enjoy the full range of what Britain has to offer.
 - The development of innovative niche markets, such as film tourism and sports tourism to unlock the full potential of Britain's unique cultural and natural heritage.
 - Encouraging the regeneration of traditional resorts to allow leisure and business visitors to enjoy high-quality amenities and services.
 - More central government support for the regions to give each part of the country better resources to develop their own identity and strengths and
 - A high profile annual tourism summit bringing together industry and government to monitor progress, plan future action and keep all sides working in partnership towards the same objectives.
- 4.7 The strategy indicated that tourism generates wealth and the value added by the tourism industry is estimated to account for between 4% and 5% of the UK Gross Domestic Product. It was based largely on our heritage,

culture and countryside and, therefore, needs to maintain the quality of the resources upon which it depends. Tourism could provide an incentive and income to protect our built and natural environment and help to maintain local culture and diversity. Where tourism is popular it underpins local commercial activity and services and could help to regenerate urban and rural areas.

- 4.8 The Government wanted to create the economic climate for enterprise and investment to benefit the tourism industry and also wanted to introduce a joined-up approach and effective support for tourism. The role of local authorities was recognised. At the time of the introduction of the plan, local authorities invested an estimated £75m per annum in the development and promotion of tourism which represented a 50% increase in real terms over the previous ten years. Local authorities were encouraged to play an active part in the development of tourism through the support of local partnerships. They provided and managed most Tourist Information Centres and ensured that standards are raised and reflected the needs of the consumers by effectively enforcing statutory obligations, such as trading standards, planning applications, good hygiene and building controls.
- 4.9 Local authorities were encouraged to take a positive attitude towards tourism and play an active part in its development, being mindful of issues relating to sustainability. They were also involved in the development of cultural strategies for each region and played an important role in promoting the services of small and medium-sized businesses through the business link network. They could also provide strategic direction and focus for the commercial sector, especially in areas where tourism is important to the local economy.
- 4.10 The government also recognised there was a need to develop a trained and motivated workforce. This included challenging negative perceptions about careers and hospitality and sought to encourage best employment and management practice, encouraging investment in training and enhancing industry co-ordination on training.
- 4.11 The Government had a vision for sustainable tourism development. This involved integrating the economic, social and environmental implications of tourism, spreading the benefits throughout society as widely as possible. This included an aim to maximise tourism potential to benefit local communities and addressing the transport issues associated with tourism.

THE REGIONAL POSITION

The North East Tourism Strategy

- 4.12 This Strategy, in line with the National Strategy, identified the following main objectives.

- Attract more visitors

- Increase tourists' average spend and day visitor spend.
- Increase visits throughout the year not solely in the main season.
- Increase employment in tourism.
- Improve the productivity of the regional tourism economy.
- Accelerate the rate of investment in the tourism product.
- Improve the quality of the tourism workforce.
- Enhance and conserve the region's natural heritage and cultural assets.
- Improve levels of visitor satisfaction.

The County Durham Tourism Strategy


- 4.13 This Strategy mirrored the aims of the North East Strategy and the Strategic Vision for County Durham. The strategy is also firmly set within the context provided by the County Durham Economic Development Strategy.
- 4.14 The aims set out in the this strategy were broadly:-
- To develop a tourism experience that matches the quality of the built heritage and natural environment offered in the County.
 - To effectively communicate this product to the visitor.
 - To increase tourism economic activity in the County.,
 - To maximise employment opportunities.
 - To ensure that the tourism sector is developed in a way that provides for long term-social and economic environmental sustainability.
 - To increase the County Durham tourism 'offer' in key markets.
- 4.15 A new delivery mechanism for tourism is being developed. This is the Area Tourism Partnership covering County Durham which would help to deliver the regional and County strategies and plan, lead, co-ordinate and evaluate progress. One aim was to address duplication and to pool resources.
- 4.16 The County Council assisted tourism through the County Durham Economic Partnership, the County Durham Development Company, the Culture and Leisure Service (now within the Adult Service) and the Environment Service. Also, other County Council services contributed to the encouragement of tourism.


SECTION 5

VISITS TO STAKEHOLDERS IN THE COUNTY DURHAM TOURISM INDUSTRY

VISIT TO BOWES MUSEUM

Discussion with the Director and Head of Marketing

- 5.1 The Scrutiny Working Group visited Bowes Museum on the 11th October 2005. Adrian Jenkins, Museum Director, and Ruth Robson, Head of Marketing and Development, explained the role of the Museum in relation to Tourism. The history of the Museum was explained.
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- 5.2 Bowes Museum was built by John Bowes and his wife, Josephine, as a Museum for their art collection in the late 19th century. It is built in the style of a magnificent French Chateau and was designed by a French architect, Jules Pellechet. John and Josephine Bowes set up a charitable trust with an endowment so that when they died the general public could enjoy the works of art which were housed in the Museum.
- 5.3 The endowment was sufficient, with other funding, to enable the Museum to continue to operate until 1956 when, because of financial difficulties, Durham County Council took over the responsibility for the charitable trust. In 2000, a new independent charitable trust was set up to replace the County Council as trustee of the Museum. The County Council provides core funding to the Museum.
- 5.4 The Museum is a major attraction in County Durham. Currently, nearly 120,000 people visit the Museum annually. This has increased steadily over the last few years. The Museum carries out regular visitor surveys to assess the quality of experience for visitors and also background information about who attends the Museum. In terms of the visitor experience, the surveys indicated high levels of visitor satisfaction. The most common suggestions for improvement were toilet provision on the ground floor and more detailed, larger, clearer interpretation. The most common method of finding out about the Museum was by word of mouth.
- 5.5 Ruth Robson had been appointed to the post of Head of Marketing and Development on the 1st September 2005. In addition, there was a Marketing Manager, an Events Officer, a Development Officer, a Marketing Assistant post which was currently vacant and a post of Administrator/Receptionist. The Museum had an annual marketing budget of £75,000 spread across advertising, printing, photography, market research, distribution, travel trade, wedding promotion, hospitality/donor care and the Museum's website.

- 5.6 The Museum received a number of services from other public sector organisations. In terms of marketing, Durham County Council provided assistance and distribution of information via library networks and other advertising. The Museum was a member of the Yorkshire Tourist Board which provided access to a research team, regular information about visitor numbers and regional trends and access to advertising outlets. Visit Britain included the Museum in some of its publications and on its website. The relationship with One North East and the Area Tourism Partnership was under discussion.
- 5.7 In terms of marketing, there was a view that significant local marketing was taking place. In relation to international marketing, this was much more difficult and the Museum looked for assistance from regional bodies. To encourage people to stay longer and spend more money within the County, the Museum staff felt that the most important issue was to raise the Museum's profile on a national and international level.
- 5.8 The skill levels of front of office staff in promoting increased tourism was recognised. A workforce development programme was being up-dated and staff had access to up-to-date training opportunities. This, however, was an area in which constant improvement was important.
- 5.9 The Museum had its origins in enthusiasm for European art. One of the exhibitions on show when the Scrutiny Working Group visited related to Napoleon. It was noted that low cost air flights from Europe were a significant opportunity for increasing European visitors to the County and Bowes Museum in particular. This was an area which the Museum was considering and they were currently looking at providing text in foreign languages on the Museum's website. In discussions with the working group, using foreign languages in audio interpretation of the Museum and multi-lingual interpretation information was raised. Front of house staff at the Museum did not have any special foreign language skills but French, German and Italian were spoken by one or more staff.
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- 5.10 The possibility of joint marketing with other County Durham attractions based on themes was raised including discounts. This had been an issue which had operated in the past.
- 5.11 Yorkshire Tourist Board visitor survey results for 2004 indicate that 3.1% of visitors to the Museum were from overseas – most commonly stated countries of origin were Spain and Australia (taken from 423 visitors who responded to the visitor survey with Yorkshire Tourist Board advising a confidence swing of +/- 3.9%. This survey was taken at the Bowes Museum from 1.10.04. to 11.1.05).
- 5.12 The interim visitor survey results for 2005 indicate that 5% of visitors were from overseas – most commonly stated countries of origin are Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. Interim results are based on 273 visitors.

5.13 Total visitor figures from the UK for the last five years are:-

2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5
76,064	78,363	92,373	95,000	112,259

The trend for paying visitors is that approximately 50% of visitors pay.

5.14 Yorkshire Tourist Board interim visitor survey results indicate that visitors choose The Bowes Museum because of the quality of the exhibition programme and art on offer. The most common way of finding out about it is by word of mouth (18% for 2005). Both reports indicate high levels of visitor satisfaction.

5.15 The Bowes Museum is a member of Teesdale Marketing, a local consortium of other cultural and heritage institutions and small business in Teesdale that operates through five strategic initiatives:-

- Discover Teesdale – marketing agency.
- Market Research.
- Skills Development.
- Food and produce.
- Events.

5.16 The Museum explained how they worked with public sector organisations to seek to increase the number of tourists coming to the Bowes Museum. In particular, they:-

- Often work in partnership with DCC Marketing Department, e.g. print distribution via library network/advertising.
- Are members of Yorkshire Tourist Board – access to research team/monthly visitor sheets for regions showing regional trends/distribution/invitations to conferences and events/access to advertising outlets.
- Use Visit Britain – access to website/listings in publications/familiarisation visits.
- Work with Government Office North East.
- Will work with the new Area Tourism Partnership.

5.17 The Museum was asked what more could be done to encourage people to stay longer and spend more money. Their response was very clear that there was a need to raise the County's profile on a national and international level.

5.18 The Museum were asked what arrangements they made for foreign visitors to enhance their visitor experience and whether any Museum staff had foreign language skills. The Museum indicates that they were currently looking at how to provide text in foreign languages on website. In addition, Discover Teesdale's website and some of their promotion literature included foreign languages.

5.19 **Summary of Issues Arising from the Visit to Bowes Museum**

- *There is an opportunity to seek to increase foreign visitors particularly from Europe. The Museum would require assistance from the region to market effectively internationally.*
- *If more foreign visitors were to be encouraged, there is perhaps a need to consider enhancing customer care issues to deal with international visitors such as multi-lingual interpretation arrangements.*
- *Co-ordination with public sector and private sector bodies involved with the tourist industry is an important issue.*

The Role of Teesdale District Council

5.20 James Usher, Head of Development at Teesdale District Council, kindly provided information about the District Council's role in relation to Tourism within their area. He explained that the District Council largely used the vehicle of Teesdale Marketing to pursue Tourism within Teesdale.

5.21 Teesdale Marketing is a 'not for profit' company formed in 1998 to promote Teesdale and encourage economic prosperity and vitality. The company attracts funding from a variety of sources for projects with clear commercial and social benefits. The company currently has approximately 130 members including Teesdale District Council and Bowes Museum.


5.22 Teesdale Marketing takes the lead in relation to tourism in the Teesdale area. It supplies the tourism, events and accommodation input for the Teesdale District Council website and the new Teesdale web gateway. The company also sourced a major financial contribution to the up-grade and refurbishment of the Barnard Castle Tourist Information Centre run by the District Council.

5.23 In terms of successes, a number of local food and produce initiatives had attracted large numbers of visitors. There is also now local food branding – Made in the Dales – with a local food producers' directory. A general Teesdale brand for Teesdale has been developed and in a number of forms is used by members of Teesdale Marketing. The Company is also leading in relation to proposals to develop Hamsterley Forest into a biking centre of excellence. There is also a proposal to build the longest rope bridge in the world in Teesdale.

- 5.24 The company did carry out some niche marketing for the international market. For example, using the DFDS Ferry for Scandinavian visitors. It was recognised that international marketing was particularly challenging.
- 5.25 Teesdale Marketing was seen as not simply a vehicle to promote tourism but was about selling the Teesdale area generally and seeking to promote its economy.

VISIT TO BEAMISH MUSEUM

Discussion with Beamish Museum Representatives

- 5.26 A visit to Beamish Museum took place on the 15th November 2005. It was explained that the aim of this project was to investigate how we can achieve more people employed in tourism, attracting more visitors who will stay longer and spend more money while they are here.
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- 5.27 The estimated turnover of the Museum for 2005/06 was £3.9 million. 96% of the running costs were provided by earned income. The total target visitor numbers annually was 320,000. The vision for the Museum was to increase this up to 500,000 by 2008. This included 40,000 education visits. 70% of the visitors to the Museum came from outside the region and 30% from the North East. The target income from visitors was £2.8 million per annum.
- 5.28 In terms of marketing, the Museum had a base budget of £254,000 for marketing together with an additional £50,000 funding from Renaissance.
- 5.29 The specific market target areas were:-
- The North East
 - North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and South Scotland
 - Group visits and coach visits from the UK
 - Schools/educational establishments within three hours travelling (not under-5s)
- 5.30 Miriam Harte, Director of the Museum, supplied a copy of the Beamish Business Plan and other publicity information for the Museum. A very relevant factor is that County Durham understands the importance of Beamish as a development of great potential and a significant contributor to the County Economy. She informed the meeting that Beamish also received good support from the Economic Partnership.
- 5.31 Referring to the workforce Miriam explained that the staff are very highly skilled and an important resource for the Museum. As the Museum has seasonal opening hours this meant that they had to recruit a significant number of workers on an annual basis but while they are at Beamish they do help them develop into highly skilled workers in the area of customer

- service as this was a fundamental requirement for any person working in tourism. Because the Beamish staff are so well trained at Beamish, they are highly sought after by their 'hub' partners to work in other museums in the area. She explained that 35-40% of the staff are repeat seasonal workers alongside a high proportion of young people who are working while at college for 3-4 years. They also have a number of long term seasonal staff. She felt that the workforce are very highly skilled and highly valued and whilst not highly paid they were not restricted to the minimum wage. ONE assumes that all jobs are low skill and low paid but their view is changing.
- 5.32 Councillor Meir asked if the Museum utilised the services of volunteer staff and Miriam Harte confirmed that they did rely heavily on volunteer staff but that they were all interviewed and assessed carefully in a managed process. They worked both behind the scenes and front of house.
- 5.33 Councillor Coates commented that in his experience of visiting the Museum it was evident that the staff were very well trained as he was always impressed by their depth of knowledge and the enthusiasm that they showed for the Museum and exhibits. He suggested that they consider providing apprenticeships.
- 5.34 Miriam provided the breakdown of the staffing establishment and information on visitors to the Museum as follows:-
- 100 full-time staff all year round
 - 100 -120 seasonal staff from Easter rising to over 200 in the Summer
 - 30-40 volunteers per month whose contribution was counted in hours rather than as actual bodies.
- 5.35 The Museum welcomed about 320,000 visitors per year with 70% coming from outside the region and 30% from the North East. The marketing budget for the Museum was £254,000 with an additional £50,000 coming from 'hub' funds. The average spend by visitors per head was £11-70 including admission, retail sales averaging £1-99 per head and catering income of £1-90 per customer.
- 5.36 The Museum has 2 retail outlets and 3 catering outlets on the site that are run in-house. The Sweet Shop, The Pub and the fairground were contracted out to external companies. Councillor Pye asked if the produce on sale was produced locally and was informed that a lot of the goods on sale were produced locally as the Museum had a policy of trying to support local businesses where possible. Miriam referred to the coal models that were made locally which were popular sellers in the shop and the Beamish Soap Company that was actually established to produce soap in Beamish. Customer feedback on the gift shop was that there was an interesting range of goods.
- 5.37 Reference was made to the average spend in 1993 being about £11.00 including admission and Miriam was asked if the Museum had any

- strategies to increase this level of spend. Miriam explained that this figure is the direct spend in the Museum and that the indirect spend in the County on accommodation, food and other goods had to be considered. The Museum also impacted on jobs in the area.
- 5.38 Referring to foreign tourists visiting the North East, Ian Mackenzie asked how many foreigners visited the Museum and if they had any strategies to increase the level of foreign visitors. Trish Hall replied that just under 5% of the visitors were foreign and although this was a slight increase they did not spend a great deal on marketing specifically to foreign tourists due to their limited marketing budget. They did some work with DFDS but generally found that there was fierce competition from Scotland and London. They did have literature about the Museum available at the Airports, stations, local hotels and the ports.
- 5.39 Miriam Harte explained that in their view they had greater priorities than marketing to attract foreign tourists. The infrastructure was still in need of development and saw access and transport as being more important. However, they did provide a brief information sheet in foreign languages and they have been asked about foreign language provision by the Tourist Board in the past but they had chosen to concentrate on using sign language.
- 5.40 Trish Hall confirmed that while foreign visitors did come they experienced great difficulty in obtaining transport to Beamish. Councillor Meir asked if transport to the Museum was also a problem for local people and Darren Jensen confirmed this was the case and that the situation will be made worse as the main link to the Museum from Durham, Bus 720 was being withdrawn soon on Sundays. Trish Hall added that 90% of visitors arrived by private transport such as cars or on group visits with coaches. Transport was a major problem for them especially out of season and this prevented them from providing a programme of Christmas functions. Also despite many discussions with Arriva and Go-Ahead North East they will not consider coming directly into the Museum and this is an issue for many people.
- 5.41 Ian Mackenzie asked if the Museum had encountered difficulty with access arrangements for disabled visitors. Miriam Harte replied that the Museum has just won an award for disabled provision but there were some access issues.
- 5.42 Councillor Carroll asked if they had any information as to where the coach trips came from and Miriam Harte replied that they were from a wide area as companies offering short breaks to the North East did call at the Museum. Wallace Arnold and Shearings offer the visit as part of their short breaks package. This is a difficult part of the market to break into as there is a lot of competition although the Museum had won the Group Travel Award for the best attraction on 2002 and 2004.

- 5.43 Councillor Meir enquired whether school groups received a subsidy and Darren Jensen answered that they offered a good rate for school groups with teachers being admitted free and on occasions they offer additional support to schools who expressed interest in specific parts of the Museum's attractions. In response to whether schools from non-contributing authorities paid more Darren Jensen explained that all schools were offered the same rate. Over half of all visits came from schools in Yorkshire and the Museum had to look at the national market not just the local market.
- 5.44 In response to the question whether people using public transport were offered any incentives to visit Miriam Harte explained that whilst they did offer a discount to public transport users it was the bus companies that advertised this and this tended to be Go Ahead Northern. The use of such facilities was not monitored due to it being a very small part of the Museum's visitors.
- 5.45 Councillor Meir asked if the Museum had a web-site and Darren Jensen replied that it did have a web-site that was being updated at present to offer many more facilities to visitors. It is also a very user friendly web-site which hopefully in the future will allow people to buy tickets on-line.
- 5.46 Referring to the Area Tourism Partnership Ian Mackenzie asked if the Museum had any involvement with this organisation. Miriam Harte responded that she was on the steering group and that it was proving to be a slow progress with a lot of discussion about the processes but so far insufficient action. She felt that Beamish Museum can contribute to the Partnership and needs to be a member but it is a time consuming task. While she feels that they are going in the right direction there is concern over some of the strategies and the whole process needs to be speeded up.
- 5.47 The Museum was asked about the level of support they received from the County Council and the District Councils to meet their aims. Members were advised that the Museum features in the County Durham Tourist Guide. Generally District Councils do not have major tourist services to offer. Added to this is the fact the Museum only have limited resources available for marketing including limited staff time.
- 5.48 Miriam Harte was asked whether the Museum collaborated with other venues to offer multi-ticketing and she explained that this does not happen at present due to the lack of technology but is something that may be considered in the future. Part of the vision for the future is multi-day ticketing to try and keep people in the region longer staying in local hotels. They already know that when visitors arrive as part of a pre-paid coach package they tend to spend more as the cost of admission is pre-paid. Ian Mackenzie asked where the most local hotel was and Miriam Harte explained that Beamish Hall was still developing but that the possibility of providing a hotel at Beamish was being explored as part of the vision for Beamish. She agreed that a key issue is to increase the number of visitors

and the level of visitor's spending. Miriam agreed that ideally that if they could spend more on marketing they would increase the number of visitors. Ian Mackenzie suggested that ONE perhaps should be persuaded to play a greater role in the marketing of Beamish. Miriam agreed they could do more to support the marketing of Beamish and advised the meeting that Beamish is currently in a dialogue with ONE to that end.

5.49 It was indicated that Beamish currently spends around £300,000 on marketing and the question was what more could they achieve if they had more funding available and how they work with other local authorities. Miriam Harte explained that all the local authorities produce their own leaflets and publicity. If they worked more closely it would be possible to avoid duplication and exploit opportunities. They also need ONE and the Area Tourism Partnership to market the regional image.

5.50 Miriam concluded by saying that Beamish Museum has been around and been successful for 30 years and was now nearly self sufficient. The fact that they are still there means that familiarity has become an issue as to why people do not visit. They have to continue to build on their success, whilst looking to continually improve. The outline of the vision for the Museum is in place. They were working closely with the Durham Economic Partnership and they were part of their plans. A long term strategy is essential as providing 'new' attractions is a time consuming issue.

5.51 **Summary of Issues Arising from the Visit to Beamish Museum**

- *Improved co-ordination in the support to the Museum in relation to publicity would be helpful.*
- *Transport was an important issue in promoting visitor numbers.*
- *Continually building on success and providing a quality experience was the key.*

DISCUSSION WITH CHRIS DAVY, ROSE AND CROWN, ROMALDKIRK

5.52 The Chairman of the Working Group and Councillor Joe Armstrong met with Chris Davy on the 24th January 2006. This was before Chris was elected as the Chair of the Area Tourism Partnership. The discussion took place at the Rose and Crown at Romalldkirk which was very helpful in understanding



the context of Chris Davy's views. Chris has been in the hotel industry all his working life. He originally trained in the Westminster Hotel School in London and then rose through key management posts at exclusive hotels in the U.K. He bought his first business in Cumbria in 1983 and in 1988 he and his wife purchased The Rose and Crown at Romalldkirk. Over the years the hotel has won many awards, including this year's national award from Michelin as the Pub of the Year 2006 – chosen from 500 pubs and

- inns. The hotel has also an impressive list of complimentary comments in national guide books and national papers and magazines.
- 5.53 Chris Davy's views are important as a representative of small businesses in the tourist industry in County Durham but perhaps more significantly Chris was the Chair of the Task Group set up by One North East to assist in the establishment of the Area Tourism Partnership in County Durham. He, therefore, had wider views about the tourist industry which were important to hear.
- 5.54 Chris was optimistic about the introduction of the Area Tourism Partnership. He was very keen that County Durham should "punch above its weight" in terms of promoting and improving the tourist industry in County Durham. He saw partnership as the opportunity to achieve improvements.
- 5.55 This project is looking particularly at the economy of the County. Chris explained that when he first arrived at the hotel there were 7 staff. The hotel now employed 40 staff of which 12 were full-time. The vast majority of the staff were local people. Chris explained the impact of the hotel on the wider economy in terms of the service industries which the hotel required. As the hotel prospered so did the local economy.
- 5.56 Some discussion took place about the most appropriate market for expansion of tourism in Durham. Chris was of the view that the domestic market was still the principal area on which to concentrate. Discussion took place about the possible impact of foreign tourists. Chris thought there were opportunities in the Scandinavian, North American and North European countries – Holland, Belgium, France - which might be exploited but as far as The Rose and Crown was concerned this was a relatively minor part of his clientele. In terms of Durham City, Chris did recognise that foreign tourists were an important market and he did agree with us that "meeting and greeting" skills in the language of visitors was an important customer care issue.
- 5.57 Chris saw marketing as the key to expanding the tourist industry in Durham. He saw the internet as a crucial factor in marketing. Increasingly, his business was more and more geared around those people who booked on the internet.
- 5.58 He was very much in favour of One NorthEast's latest publicity campaign – "Passionate People. Passionate Places" – but he did admit that as he himself appeared in some of the publicity he had a vested interest. It was clear, however, that there was a direct correlation between this type of marketing and the numbers of bookings at the hotel. A recent initiative to offer a free weekend as part of publicity had been particularly successful. He was clear that for The Rose and Crown, tourism was a twelve-months-a-year industry and not seasonal. The hotel was currently still very busy.

- 5.59 In discussions about training, Chris thought that a skilled and well-trained workforce was essential to improve the tourist industry. He was very supportive of the training initiative undertaken by the Durham Tourism Skills Partnership headed by Caroline Richards and also the "Welcome Host" training scheme. However, The Rose and Crown tended to carry out most staff training in-house. Additional training was provided at Darlington College.
- 5.60 In terms of publicity, leaflets were provided to the hotel by a number of bodies. These leaflets were helpful but there were so many available that Chris had taken the view that it was better to write their own guide. In this way, they could direct people to places of interest so that they did not waste valuable time on short-stay breaks. In addition to the guide, guests were provided with direct advice about where to go and what to see.
- 5.61 The role of the public sector was considered. Chris thought that the input from the local authorities into the Area Tourism Partnership was crucial. However, he was firmly of the view that the role of the local authority should be to provide infrastructure and support and allow the tourist industry to get on with delivery. In terms of marketing, there was a view that the numbers of brochures produced perhaps needed to be reviewed and that the tourist industry and the ATP should have more influence on the publicity material produced by the public sector. This might produce some savings which could be directed into more productive areas in the tourist industry.
- 5.62 Transport was considered. For The Rose and Crown the vast majority of guests arrived by private car. Cycling and walking was a big share of the market and the development of cycling opportunities at Hamsterley were seen by Chris as an important opportunity. Other similar initiatives in other parts of the country had demonstrated that this was an expanding part of the market.
- 5.63 Chris saw the ATP being in a prime position to develop the tourist industry in County Durham. The partnership would be able to look specifically at the visitor experience within the County which could then drive improvements.
- 5.64 Some consideration took place about the possible disadvantages of expanding the tourist industry. Chris was very firmly of the view that tourism was an essential part of Durham County's economy and that an expansion could be accommodated without too much difficulty. The issue of pay in the industry, which was seen to be low, was discussed. Chris thought that the National Minimum Wage had helped to address this problem and the industry is now paying more realistic wages. At The Rose and Crown they had chosen to offer a higher rate to attract the best people on the market.
- 5.65 Overall, Chris felt that there were great opportunities for expanding the tourist industry in County Durham and, whilst it had taken some time for the preparation and planning for the Area Tourism Partnership, it would shortly

be established. He did make the point, however, that the first year would need to be establishing structures and that this needed to be understood in the tourist industry. Delivery of results would take time.

COUNTYWIDE

5.66 An article about this project appeared in the January 2006 edition of Countywide, the Council's own newspaper. A number of comments were made in response to this article including:-

- The need for more simple, inexpensive bed and breakfast accommodation and;
- The need for public toilets in rural areas.

SECTION 6

DISCUSSION WITH ONE NORTH EAST'S REPRESENTATIVE

PRESENTATION BY LOUISE DAVIS, HEAD OF TOURISM

'Passionate People, Passionate Places'

- 6.1 On the 5th December 2005, Louise Davies, Head of Tourism at One NorthEast had a discussion with members of the Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
- 6.2 Louise explained that Tourism was high profile for the Government which was trying to address the economic isolation the area was working under. The issue was highlighted during the Foot and Mouth outbreak when it was clear there was a lack of integration and cohesion although this was a nationwide problem and not restricted to the North East.
- 6.3 There has been a major change, with the functions of the Northumbrian Tourist Board being taken into the Regional Development Agency with the creation of Tourism Network North East supported by four Area Tourism Partnerships. Louise Davis then explained the current position and invited questions from Members.
- 6.4 The views of stakeholders about what they saw as a delay in the development of a new regional tourism strategy was raised. Louise said that the main reason for the delay was the need to establish a new policy at regional level. She said that this was recognised this but there was a range of changes she wanted to see at regional level. However, perhaps mixed messages were being received. She added that there had been no lack of action as all the services previously provided under NTB have continued. Evidence of visitor numbers has been gathered which means that it was possible to take a baseline on tourism on a regional level.

- 6.5 Louise Davis explained that £1.7m was allocated to tourism marketing on a tactical marketing basis with a further £3m for regional marketing. ONE did not work on the basis of promoting just Durham but on the promotion of the whole of the North East.
- 6.6 Louise was asked how we could ensure that residents are getting good value for money. Louise replied that the Area Tourism Partnership will ensure that good value for money will be achieved and that Durham is marketed as part of the regional marketing strategy. Money would also be channelled via the County Durham Development Company.
- 6.7 She was asked how much had been spent so far on the 'Passionate People: Passionate Places' campaign and what consultation was there before this campaign was launched. Louise Davis replied that, whilst it was too soon to evaluate the full impact of the campaign, it had been obvious that a campaign to highlight the regional image was required and the decision was taken to use local people rather than celebrities. This is a major campaign that has been funded to the extent of £3 million per year for 3 years and the campaign will be continued as it had attracted huge interest. Referring to the question of consultation, Louise Davis accepted that there had been no consultation on the campaign. She was asked when One North East would be assessing the success of the campaign and was advised that this would have to be done before the end of the third year of the programme and that there had been some tracking of enquiries received as a result of the campaign.
- 6.8 Louise was asked about local skills and small businesses involved in the County Durham and asked what support is to be given to small businesses in the future. He also asked why the new arrangements had no name by which they could be identified.
- 6.9 Louise Davis replied that such organisations normally fall outside Government strategies and they were trying to find routes through other methods to provide tourism support. There was also a lack of tourism expertise in the Business Link Network and the gaps have to be found before they can be filled and it was not just about marketing. In County Durham we have to develop programmes to improve provision and support and this was a priority for ONE. In response to the question concerning a name Louise explained that large amounts of money could be spent trying to market an identity and this was not a priority at present.
- 6.10 Louise was asked if ONE had any proposals for the promotion of the Durham Coastline. Louise agreed that this was a massively under exploited area and that an action plan for the whole of the North East coastline including Durham was being developed but ONE had to adopt a strategic approach to the whole coastline.



- 6.11 Louise Davis explained that in the first year, the work of Northumbria Tourist Board continued under ONE but, in the second year, the team had been relocated and restructured. Some of the strengths of NTB have been retained. IT work has continued and whilst the vision of NTB was sound the implementation needed to be strengthened. DestinE should be up and running in 2006. In terms of regional marketing the budget has been doubled and the Regional Tourism Strategy has been developed. As they have been working on policies and strategies it may have appeared that nothing was happening when in fact this work was essential for the area. In the meantime they have maintained the previous service but Louise did accept that ONE could have improved its communication of the change that was underway.
- 6.12 Louise was asked if research had been carried out to see how much benefit the North east receives in relation to the cash invested. She replied that no research had been done as no procedures have been developed to do this yet. Some work has begun. However, a national framework was being developed. Regarding the national and international split Louise explained that more work was being aimed at the domestic market as this seemed more important at present although some work was being done in conjunction with the budget airlines. Some work was also being targeted in China as this was considered to have a huge potential in the future.
- 6.13 It was suggested that this was a high risk strategy to develop tourism when there did not appear to be any base figures and it was difficult to assess the financial benefit or disbenefit for the region. Louise agreed that the strategy did not yet have decisive performance targets. To an extent it was assumed that tourism has to be a good thing for County Durham and acknowledged that there are a number of attractive products available to attract visitors to County Durham.
- 6.14 Reference was made to the Prince Bishops Strategy and asked whether this still remained as a strategy. Stewart Watkins answered that the company will continue to support this strategy.
- 6.15 Referral was made to the recent growth in low cost airlines flying from both the regions airports and expressed the concerns that this industry was actually a drain on the region as they did not generate much, if any, inbound tourism for the region. He asked how much money ONE provided in supporting these airlines. Louise Davis replied saying that ONE did not support any of the low cost airlines. She added that the budget airlines did not receive RDA support either, however, it may be that ONE needs to develop a package to offer foreign markets. She was asked what was being done on the Continent to encourage inbound tourism. Louise Davis informed the meeting that the England North Country Partnership was a small group promoting international marketing. The North East was the least resourced area and ONE have now increased the level of support and other airports are now involved such as Manchester which is now a big entry gate to the North of England.

- 6.16 The increase in foreign tourism might involve developing vocational learning skills in modern foreign languages. Louise Davis indicated that there is a lack of understanding as to what foreign visitors want. There is also a complacency issue to overcome in that there is a prevailing assumption that everyone speaks English. The public sector also needs to work at improving the gateways to the area for both British and foreign visitors.
- 6.17 Referring to marketing, it was highlighted that most marketing was done on a partnership basis e.g. North Yorkshire and the North East or North East and the Lakes and asked whether the marketing should be carried out for the North East on a standalone basis. Louise Davis agreed that we needed to determine whether there is an advantage in joint marketing as other areas marketed themselves alone.
- 6.18 She was asked if this region would lose out to areas such as the Lake District. Louise responded that regional campaigns get people to the area and it was the role of the ATP to get people to the local point of interest and to be the information provider. The internet has a role to play in this as well as tourist information offices which the Regional Tourist Board are trying to keep going. There is some value in looking at centres that need to work together to promote each others areas e.g. The North East, Yorkshire, The North West and the Lake District as their customer today is ours tomorrow.
- 6.19 Louise was asked how ONE would be ensuring that other Government Departments provide a joined up approach to tourism, for example, in relation to transport. She replied that the Department of Culture and Leisure was receiving lots of feedback identifying the need for improvement in the present system. The National Tourism Needs Group would be responsible for issues like the provision of signage and transport. It was pointed out that one of the biggest problems in the region was a lack of access to local attractions. Louise Davis explained that the Area Tourism Management Plan was identifying such shortfalls so our region could benefit from their findings.
- 6.20 In terms of tourism technology, Destin-e was quite well developed under the auspices of the NTB. Louise Davis was asked why there has been a delay in introducing this initiative. She replied that tourism technology has now improved so much and the NTB had not updated the programme continually as is necessary. This has now been done as an area of priority. The main problem was that they had been sold a vision that was not very visionary however, it will be available from April 2006.
- 6.21 Louise was asked what is happening in other regions and how does the North East compare in terms of the level of investment and strategies. Is the strategy in Scotland a similar one. She replied that the North East does not compare well at only 4% of the national market. The situation is that the further away from London you go there is a corresponding reduction in the number of visits. The belief is the North East is not a great tourism

asset although it has massive potential for growth and has the capacity to increase in volume and quantity. The building blocks are now in place to develop the industry in the North East.

6.22 In terms of the market, the domestic market was considered the priority. International marketing was a difficult area and there were new markets becoming available such as China which might have huge potential. In discussing foreign visitors, it was accepted that there was a need to have a better knowledge of the benefits of some vocational language skills for key tourist staff. One North East was working with the Regional Languages Network to assess what training needs were required in this area.

6.23 **Summary of Issues Arising from the Discussion with One NorthEast**

- *It was still not clear whether increasing tourism would be a net benefit for the County although One North East was working on the basis that this would be so.*
- *The changes introduced by One North East were still under consideration and consultation. It appeared that it would be some time before the Area Tourism Partnership in County Durham was fully operating. The Area Tourism Partnership would be the vehicle for determining the strategy in County Durham including issues such as the future of the Land of the Prince Bishops initiative. It may be some time before the approach within the County Durham Area Tourism Partnership is clarified.*
- *Small businesses were intended to be supported by Business Link in County Durham but it was not clear whether Business Link had sufficient tourism knowledge to undertake that role most effectively.*
- *The role of the Durham Heritage Coast had yet to be determined. Marketing to attract the international market involved north west England and Yorkshire. It was not clear what the impact would be on County Durham and the north east. The aim was to promote the three regions together.*

SECTION 7

TOURISM PROMOTION BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

7.1 A presentation was received from Stewart Watkins, CDDC, Rosemary Laxton, Culture and Leisure (now the Adult Service) and Andy Niven, Environment giving a view of the role undertaken by Durham County Council in relation to Tourism. Overall, expenditure via the County Durham Economic Partnership for 2005/6 on tourism issues was of the order of £900,000 from Single Programme Funding. During the same period, the County Durham Development Company had expenditure of £520,000. In addition, Culture and Leisure and the Environment Services made significant contributions to tourism expenditure although it was difficult to

distinguish between expenditure on tourism and 'routine' expenditure in the provision of services. District Councils also contributed to tourism promotion. This varied considerably across the County from a significant input from the City of Durham Council to more modest contributions from other Councils.

- 7.2 It was emphasised during the presentation that the authority concentrates on publications which market the area as a visitor destination with the County Durham Holiday Guide, being the most extensive publication produced which is distributed both nationally and internationally. In addition, the authority provides specific publications, in relation to various attractions i.e., Industrial Heritage, Castles, Gardens etc.
- 7.3 With reference to the work undertaken by the Countryside Group, Andy Niven explained that this Group is responsible for the delivery and management of access and enjoyment of the Durham countryside. He then continued by highlighting the work of the Group and emphasised the work the promotion of the countryside through events and walks, maintaining and improving the Rights of Way network and designate and enhance Local Nature Reserves.
- 7.4 With reference to the role undertaken by Culture and Leisure, Rosemary Laxton informed members that the Service Manages the following Museums:-

Durham Light Infantry Museum and Durham Art Gallery

This Museum currently attracts about 41,000 visitors each year. 33% of visitors came from outside County Durham.

Killhope Lead Mining Museum

Killhope is visited by about 21,000 people annually. It is estimated that only 3% of visitors were from outside the UK with visitors from Australia and New Zealand forming the majority of overseas visitors. Just over 50% of the visitors come from the north east.

Binchester Roman Fort

Binchester Roman Fort has about 3,100 visitors annually; about 55% of these visitors come from outside the County.

- 7.5 Stewart Watkins emphasised that the authority should be proud of the development which has taken place. The County has been transformed over the last 20 years. There are now no signs of industrial degradation. He continued that the tourism potential of the area is enormous and there is a need to develop additional local accommodation and attractions.

- 7.6 He then identified the following key issues:-
- The future role of local authorities in Tourism including the County Council
 - The relationship with the private sector
 - Training and skills
 - New delivery mechanism
- 7.7 He emphasised the need for engagement with the private sector. In addition, he highlighted the need to remove the perception often held in relation to tourism employment; in particular, that these jobs were seasonal and low paid. He also thought there was a need to enhance the welcoming skills of those in the tourism sector.
- 7.8 It was mentioned that there is a direct correlation in relation to money spent on marketing and the number of visitors. The question was posed in relation to the average spend per day visitor of £11.70, what is the total cost to the county? Stewart thought there was a need to get visitors to spend more money in the County's economy and it is not just a case of attracting numbers to the area. It was emphasised that the private sector would want to be involved in relation to pro-active tourism. It was also acknowledged that there is a need to have more clarity in relation to some of the tourism literature. Work is currently being undertaken by the ATP and other County Council services to provide more signs identifying routes/location of attractions within County Durham.
- 7.9 The working group was informed that the current County Council Tourism Budget allocated to the County Durham Development Company had been reduced during the recent budget exercise. This was in the light of the introduction of the Area Tourism Partnership. Discussions will be taking place with the Partnership to determine the best way of working together with the Partnership to promote tourism in County Durham.

AUDIT OF TOURIST INFORMATION

- 7.10 A small study had taken place of tourism brochures and leaflets at three locations in the County – the Durham Tourist Information Centre, Durham Railway Station and County Hall. The audit information is attached as an appendix. This audit illustrated that there was a need to give further thought to the strategy of publicity. For example, there were a large number of brochures in the Durham City Tourist Information Centre produced by both the public and private sector. Many were of high quality but there appeared to be a lack of overall co-ordination and focus. The Tourist Information Centre provides a high standard of service to tourists. It was noted, however, that there was an absence of information on display produced in foreign languages such as French or German. This raised the issue of the approach to foreign visitors who do not speak English.

SECTION 8

THE COUNTY DURHAM AREA TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

8.1 The Partnership has been set up to drive tourism forward in County Durham and give the area a strong voice in regional tourism. It is supported by One NorthEast, the County Durham Economic Partnership and the local authorities. At the time of writing this report, the Partnership is in its early stages. Chris Davy has been appointed the Chairman and there is a strong Partnership Board which has been formed. Key staff are being appointed. In accordance with the discussions which took place with Chris Davy, it will clearly be some time before the Partnership is able to be fully operational. The timing of this report is, therefore, a useful opportunity to seek to assist the Partnership in developing tourism in County Durham.

SECTION 9

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 This investigation has provided a deeper understanding of the key issues about the development of tourism in County Durham. The report is timely in that the Area Tourism Partnership is currently in its formative stages and there is an opportunity to influence the way in which the partnership develops.

9.2 Perhaps the key issues which have arisen from the evidence are:-

- One of the County Council's key priorities for improvement in the 2005/6 Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan to assist in building a strong economy in County Durham was to help build the tourism sector and, in particular, the value of the tourism sector in the County.
- Tourism is also reflected as a key challenge in the Strategic Vision. The aim is to increase the percentage of the workforce employed in tourism, increase the skill levels of employees, increase the amount of money people spend in the County and raise local and national awareness of the County's attractions.
- For the year 2006/7, tourism is no longer a priority area for the Council but is still an important factor in the County's economy.

Some Statistics – based on 2003 figures

- Durham County's share of the national tourism market is currently only 4%.
 - Nevertheless, tourism is worth an estimated £322m each year to Durham's economy
 - An estimated 17 million visitors come to County Durham each year but 15.7 million come only for one day and 1.3 million for over one day
 - Of those 1.3 million visitors who come to Durham for more than a day, the average length of stay of visitors is only 2.8 days with a total average spend of these visitors of £105.00.
 - The average spend by those who visit for one day is £11.70.
 - Approximately 70,000 visitors come to Durham each year from overseas.
 - Total employment is estimated to be 6,700 people directly and indirectly employed
-
- Whilst tourism in this country continues to grow, our share of the world market is declining
 - The North East does not compare well in terms of its market share nationally - only an estimated 4% of the total market
 - OneNorthEast is now responsible for promoting tourism in the North East. They have increased publicity spending considerably although it is too early to tell how successful this has been
 - There is significant enthusiasm locally that the potential share of the tourism market in County Durham can be significantly increased.
 - As the Council's policies indicate, an increase in tourism needs to be pursued carefully to provide overall benefits to the County including ensuring that those who work in the tourist industry are appropriately trained and adequately remunerated.
 - The development of tourism in County Durham also needs to be progressed sustainably. We need to ensure that we safeguard the attractions of the County on a long term basis and provide tourism growth which can continue into the foreseeable future.
 - In speaking to stakeholders in the tourist industry there was a recognition that there needs to be an increase in the focus of both the public and private sector to further develop tourism in County Durham. There is a perceived

need for better co-ordination and avoidance of duplication particularly in relation to publicity

- There is no overall strategy in relation to supporting and encouraging overseas visitors particularly those visitors who do not speak English
- A large number of publicity brochures is produced by the County Council but the overall strategy and the way in which these brochures co-ordinate with other publicity to promote tourism is not clear.
- The County Council is refocusing its support to tourism and is no longer to produce the County Durham Holiday brochure
- The County Council needs to consider its overall support to the Area Tourism Partnership and the way it co-ordinates its tourism support within its various services and through the County Durham Development Company
- There is need for a more co-ordinated focus in the way in which the various County Council services promotes tourism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.3 The development of the tourist industry in County Durham was identified as a key aim in building a strong economy. This is no longer a priority for improvement but remains an important element of the County's economic strategies. This investigation has demonstrated that the North East still has a very modest share of the national tourism industry. This is reflected in the position in County Durham. Durham City attracts significant numbers of tourists but this appears to be for day visits and the spend per tourist is estimated to be under £12. The Strategic Vision also looks to creating new tourism projects in coastal and western rural locations but few projects have yet been developed.
- 9.4 One NorthEast has significantly increased spending on the marketing of the North East under the 'Passionate People: Passionate Places' logo. It is too early to say whether this will have a significant impact on County Durham's tourism industry. The Area Tourism Partnership has now just been formed and this Partnership will be the new vehicle for promoting tourism in County Durham.
- 9.5 In many respects, an increase in the tourism economy in County Durham is dependent upon the new regional and County approach. It is, therefore, perhaps timely that this report has reviewed the current position and can provide some considered views about the way forward. It is noted, however, that, in gathering evidence, the members of the working group have detected a degree of impatience within the tourist industry about the time taken to develop this new approach.

- 9.6 The following recommendations are made for consideration by Cabinet. Many are targeted particularly at the operation of the Area Tourism Partnership and the Council's approach to the Partnership.

The main recommendation is that:-

i. **The County Council needs to urgently clarify its role and operation in relation to the Area Tourism Partnership.**

In approaching this new relationship, the following issues have arisen in this investigation and, in our view, require consideration.

- Representatives from the tourist industry have pointed out the need for co-ordination and reduction of duplication in the provision of publicity material and support. There is a great deal of information available. It will be for the Partnership to provide advice to the Council about the most effective publicity and support.
- Tourism still has an image as a low-pay, low-skilled industry. If tourism is to assist in promoting the County's economy, there needs to be a move towards a higher-skilled and better remunerated workforce with a particular focus on promoting longer visits and 'repeat' visits.
- There needs to be further clarification of the main market which is to be expanded. Is it the number of day trips or extending the period of visits or both. The role of the overseas market and non-English speaking tourists also needs to be considered in more detail.
- The total spend of those visitors who stay more than one day and those who visit for one day is modest. There is a balance to be struck but the benefits of tourism need to be manifestly an overall benefit for County Durham's economy and an increase in spend to assist the local economy should be a key focus. It is suggested that the priority should be to increase tourism spend rather than simply attract more tourists.
- The possibilities of co-ordinating marketing of tourist attractions in Durham do not seem to be exploited to any great extent at the moment. In the past, marketing has been carried out involving a number of attractions. This is an area which perhaps should be pursued particularly using booking via a website.
- There does not seem to be any clear process of monitoring the success of OneNorthEast's new publicity campaign and the impact on County Durham. This must be a key to any long term strategy.

ii. **Performance indicators should be developed to assist the Council in assessing progress and the overall benefits of tourism to the Council.**

At the moment, there is no regular report to Councillors about the progress being made in relation to the development of tourism. It is understood that

some performance indicators are being developed. It is important that appropriate information is provided including the trends in visitor numbers, their spend and length of stay, so that the overall benefits of tourism to the County can be assessed.

iii. **Consideration should be given to a transparent corporate approach to tourism within the County Council.**

The County Council currently has no regular Officer Working Group to seek to co-ordinate tourism issues across all the County Council services including the County Durham Development Company. The establishment of a structure to deliver this corporate aim should be considered.

iv. **The Strategic Vision should be revisited in relation to tourism issues.**

The Strategic Vision looks to creating new tourism projects in coastal and western rural locations but few projects have been developed. This, perhaps, needs to be revisited in the context of maximising the potential benefit to local communities as has been achieved, for example, by The Rose and Crown at Romaldkirk.

v. **On the basis that tourism will be a highly skilled and appropriately remunerated industry, the County Council should be promoting this as an opportunity for local employment and sustainable businesses.**

APPENDIX 1

'WISH YOU WERE HERE'**AUDIT OF TOURIST INFORMATION IN COUNTY DURHAM: JANUARY 2006**

As part of this scrutiny investigation we have carried out a simple audit of publicity information currently available to tourists or potential tourist in County Durham. This was a process of collecting leaflets and brochures in the following locations: Durham City Tourist Information Centre, Durham City Train Station and Durham County Council Help Desk.

1. **DURHAM CITY TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE: 50 ITEMS**

County Durham Holiday Guide 2006: Durham County Council

It's amazing where our walks can lead you: A guide to the inspirational walks of North East England: One North East & ITV Britain on the move

Durham Cathedral: County Durham, Development Company

Diggerland: Rospa occupational health and safety awards, Northumbria Tourist Board, Southern & South East England Tourist Board. Southwest tourism & Medway

Barnard Castle, historic market town- gateway to Teesdale: Teesdale market towns partnership

Meet the Middletons: North Pennines

The Bowes Museum: Durham County Council, English Tourist Council, Friends of the Bowes museum, MLA, Renaissance North East & The British Museum

Eggleston Hall Gardens-The secret garden of the North East: Eggleston Hall gardens

Discover Teesdale- an outstanding experience: Teesdale

Discover Teesdale: Teesdale District Council

Hall Hill Farm: Durham Leisure and tourism, Northumbria Tourist board & National Farmers union.

High Force: Visit Teesdale

Dales on Rails: Tees Valley Tourism Bureau

Durham Dales Centre- Visitor information: The Durham Dales Centre

Visit Weardale- At the heart of the North Pennines: Visit Weardale

Harperley Prisoner of War camp: Firtree, Crook, County Durham

Visit Wear Valley- The Heart of the North Pennines: Wear Valley District Council

County Durham 2005-Attractions: Durham County Council

County Durham Cycling: Durham County Council

County Durham Industrial Heritage: Durham County Council

County Durham Gardens: Durham County Council

County Durham Castles: Durham County Council

A Tour through County Durham: Durham County Council

Open up the World of Beamish: English Tourist Council, quality assured visitor attraction

A walk around...Castle Eden: A Millennium Project

A walk around...Dawson and Dalton Le Dale: A Millennium Project

A walk around...Hawthorn: A Millennium Project

A walk around Crimdon: A Millennium Project

A walk around Easington Village: A Millennium Project

A walk around Easington Colliery: A Millennium Project

A Walk around Murton, South Hetton: District of Easington

A Walk around Hutton Henry, Hurworth Burn: District of Easington

A Walk around High Hesleden, Nesbitt Dene: District of Easington

A Walk around Thornley: District of Easington

Cycle routes in County Durham, County Durham North- Skirting the cities-Routes to roam: Durham County Council

Cycle routes in County Durham, County Durham West- Hills and hollows- Trees and trails: Durham County Council

Cycle routes in County Durham, County Durham South-Village and towns-tracks without trains: Durham County Council

Hardwick Park- hidden landscape: Durham County Council

The Dere Street Trail: Durham County Council

County Durham Activities, Land of Prince Bishops: Durham County Council

Escomb Church: English Tourist Board, County Durham land of prince bishop & member of Northumbria tourist board

Battle of Nevilles's Cross- An illustrated history: Northumbrian water, Durham County Council & City of Durham

What's on- The DLI museum and Durham Art Gallery: Durham County Council

Durham Wildlife Trust- Visitor Centres: Barclays, The Northern Rock foundation, DEFRA: department for environment, food and rural & The countryside agency

District of Easington- Visitor guide: District of Easington

Northumbria North East England- Holiday and short break guide 2005: One North East

Great North Forest-Linear Walks: Nexus, Great North Forest, Go North East, The Countyside Agency, Durham County Council, South Tyneside Council & Gateshead Council.

Discover the Orient from Ancient Egypt to Contemporary China: The Oriental museum, Durham University

Cycle Northumbria: One North East, The Countryside Agency & Sustrans routes for people

Welcome to Durham City: Durham City Tourism

No items on display were printed in foreign language. On request, the last item-Welcome to Durham City is available in French and German.

2. DURHAM CITY TRAIN STATION: 6 ITEMS

County Durham Holiday Guide 2006: Durham County Council

A Tour through County Durham: Durham County Council

County Durham 2005-Attactions: Durham County Council

County Durham Castles: *Durham County Council*

County Durham- guided walks, events and news, October 2005 to March 2006: *Durham County Council*

Welcome to Durham City: *Durham City Tourism*

No leaflets were available in a foreign language.

3. **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL HELP DESK: 23 ITEMS**

County Durham Holiday Guide 2006: *Durham County Council*

County Durham 2005-Attractions: *Durham County Council*

County Durham Industrial Heritage: *Durham County Council*

County Durham Gardens: *Durham County Council*

County Durham Castles: *Durham County Council*

County Durham Cycling: *Durham County Council*

Lets go cycling in the Kyo area: *Durham County Council, One North East, County Durham Environmental Trust, River Team Revival Project, Sustains: The sustainable transport charity, Dewenside district council, Groundwork-west Durham, Great North Forest & The Countryside Agency*

The Dere Street Trail- Roman Heritage in and around County Durham: *Durham County Council*

Durham Heritage Coast: *Environmental agency, District of Easington, Heritage Lottery Fund and The Countryside Agency.*

Buses to Beamish: *Durham County Council & Traveline*

Haswell to Hart Walkway: *A Millennium Project*

A walk around...Castle Eden: *A Millennium Project*

A walk around...Dawson and Dalton Le Dale: *A Millennium Project*

A walk around...Hawthorn: *A Millennium Project*

A walk around Seaham: *A Millennium Project*

A walk around Crimdon: *A Millennium Project*

Easington- an adventure in time: *a Millennium Project*

Easington Art: A guide to artwork in the East of Durham: A Millennium Project

District of Easington: Visitor Guide: District of Easington

A walk around Wheatley Hill-Deaf Hill: District of Easington

Great North Forest-Linear Walks: Nexus, Great North Forest, Go North East, The Countyside Agency, Durham County Council, South Tyneside Council & Gateshead Council.

Tanfield Railway 2006- Time tables and information: Tanfield railway association.

Open Access in the North Pennines: Northumberland County Council, Cumbria County Council, Durham County Council & The Countryside agency Landscape Access Recreation.

County Durham- guided walks, events and news, October 2005 to March 2006: Durham County Council

No leaflets were available in a foreign language.

Attendance List

VISIT TO BOWES MUSEUM – 11th OCTOBER 2005

Present:-

Members:-

Councillors: Armstrong, Carroll, Chaplow and Pye.

(Councillor Bell representing DCC and Teesdale District Council),

VISIT TO BEAMISH MUSEUM – 15th NOVEMBER 2005

Councillors Carroll, Coates, Marshall, Meir and Pye.

Present:-

Members -

Councillors Armstrong, Bowman, Chapman, Cordon, Douthwaite, Gray, Pye, Simmons, Southwell and Williams.

If you require this information summarised in other languages or formats, such as Braille, large print or talking tapes, please contact: (0191) 383 3506

" إذا كنت بحاجة إلى تلقي خلاصة هذه المعلومات في اللغة العربية فيرجى الاتصال بالرقم 0191 383 3506 "

如果你想得到廣東話的資訊，請致電 0191 383 3506

यदि आपनि बाङ्गला अई उधाउन्निर एकटि सारसङ्केप हान जरे अनुभूद करे 0191 383 3506 नहरें खेन करन ।

यदि आप इरा सूचना का सार हिन्दी में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया 0191 383 3506 पर फोन करें।

नेवर कुमी हिस मुपठा दा सार पंजाबी 'ਚ ਚਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਲਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0191 383 3506 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ

" اگر آپ کو ان معلومات کا خلاصہ اردو میں چاہئے تو برائے مہربانی 0191 383 3506 "