

Joint Committee Meeting 15th November 2013

Item 2 Appendix B Notes from Regional Stakeholder Group meeting 25/10/13

1. Introduction of attendees/members of Regional Stakeholder Group.

Welcome and introduction to the group from Cllr Carl Marshall.

2. Beamish Museum's future plans looking forward to 2014/15.

Presentation by Richard Evans, Director of Beamish Museum.

- Explained where Beamish can participate in particular areas of interest for the region. In particular: Education; the development of Active Aging programmes; Strategy and Planning; and the Cultural Agenda (particularly regional tourism and EU investment).
- Described Beamish's recent growth in terms of visitor numbers and FTE staff
- Emphasised that 60% visitors come from outside the North East region: real opportunity for local service sector amenities.
- Stressed that Beamish focusses on its links with local communities: donations/selection of objects, working with community groups on particular outreach projects.
- Beamish has rolling programmes of capital development with relatively little public investment, but aims to be self-sustaining in capital terms.

Forthcoming capital development projects:

2014-15

- Eston Church in 1820s Georgian area.
- Transport: steam engineering skills; development of workshops thanks to donation from Stockton Council
- Transfer of Victorian Home Farm to a WW2 Farm
- Chemist/ photographers in 1900s town

Beyond 2015

-1820s

- Development of 16th century post mill from Blyth
- Blacksmith from Wolsingham
- Candle House from Westgate
- Lime kiln
- A reconstruction of Joe the Quilter's Cottage
- Great North Road coaching inn suitable for people to spend the night.

-1950s development

- Telling the story of agricultural changes through Spainsfield Farm from Weardale
- Also, urban development with a 1950s town, including: cinema, aged miners' homes, community centre, garage, football pitch and Airey Houses form Gateshead.

3. Group Discussion session and feedback.

Group 1

Learning Programmes for Schools

- Beamish can be a catalyst to help engage schools groups across different museums- a visit/ education session can generate other visits locally.
- Immersion is Beamish's strength, which can impact museum education delivery in a different way.
- Beamish and other museums could link up different avenues of funding.
- It's important to create sustained relationships with schools (repeat visits).
- Sharing skills across institutions (e.g. recent education project with Killhope Museum). Identify gaps across organisations and target funding accordingly.
- An emotional involvement from children can benefit learning process: immersive sessions and workshops in schools help to foster this.
- Better communication: marketing within the cultural sector to show what museums can offer.

Working with older people living with dementia

- A real need to demonstrate the effectiveness of reminiscence sessions: Beamish is currently linking with Newcastle University to look at dementia and reminiscence.
- Develop a sustainable offer that is able to cope with demand.
- Communicate and network with individual day centres and care homes to foster long-term informal relationships.
- Develop a proactive relationship with CCGs and use common language to communicate what museums can offer and understand what they (CCGs) value.
- There is a value to collaborative work with other arts/museums organisations.

Group 2

Cultural Tourism/ Audience Development/Marketing

- There are roles for L7 and ANEC in making the case for EU investment.
- Sector led advocacy- need to ensure that the sector and its impact on the economy is recognised. The challenges with working at a regional level were noted – an opportunity for cross sector ANEC partnership including Beamish.
- Working in Cultural Partnerships to make the case for culture to LEPs; roles also for colleges and local businesses in this. There is urgency here, preferably act before Christmas.
- Beamish has a good opportunity to help, but does have a limited capacity.
- Tourism/Marketing: need for greater co-ordination across region; what would this look like? Why do people visit the North East? Do they visit the region or particular destinations within it? Need to examine customer relationship data.
- In support of this 'regional approach' to reach further nationally and internationally: opportunity to be proactive together using heritage.

- Beamish can have an important role in a campaign for EU investment through LEPs. Need to start engaging on this front now.
- “Business Friends”: use this network to help make case for greater cultural investment in North East.

Group 3

Business Planning

- Cultural partnerships and ANEC have the potential use a strategic approach in creating a network across the whole region, including areas often missed out such as Redcar/Cleveland/Teesside, for cultural heritage.
- Cultural Partnerships have opportunity to be very useful in communicating with LEPs the potential of heritage tourism for the region and this needs to be addressed as a priority.
- Beamish’s perspective on models for running museums would be welcomed as provision for culture is reviewed. Beamish could play a significant support role, but would need MPM support and funding to enable resources and the capacity to support and advise cultural sector in the region.
- Volunteering is common across museum sector: needs exploring further around issues such as staff/volunteer relationships.
- Urgent need for forward thinking in the current economic climate: commercial sustainability, maximising earned income.
- Raise awareness of the region’s cultural offer as a whole- create national and international links: Captain Cook Birthplace Museum.
- Sharing information/skills/advice between organisations for sustainability. Potential solution is to create templates advising what each museum’s offer is and make use of open sources with online access allowing mutual benefit.
- Joint marketing and communications has the potential to be beneficial.
- Need to address the challenge of competition between museums, for example during the WW1 celebrations over the next few years. Need to find strategies of working together through common themes and issues without becoming homogenised/ preserving organisations’ identities.
- Urgency was emphasised for many of these issues.