

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

30 March 2017



Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Review of tourism marketing activity undertaken by Visit County Durham

Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Regeneration and Local Services

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The report provides members with an update on the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained within the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review Group report of tourism marketing activity undertaken by Visit County Durham (VCD).

Background

- 2 At a special meeting of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 January 2015 members agreed the terms of reference for the review with the aim of investigating the performance of VCD in marketing County Durham as a visitor destination and to determine how future marketing will continue to build upon recent success.
 - (a) The role and responsibilities of VCD in marketing the County as a visitor destination.
 - (b) The work of other key partners in marketing Durham as a visitor destination, how they work in partnership with VCD and their views of the role and work of VCD, to include: members of the Strategic Marketing Partners Group; Durham University; Durham Cathedral; Durham County Cricket Club; Durham Business Improvement District Company; Beamish and The Bowes Museum.
 - (c) The performance of VCD in marketing the County as a visitor destination, with a focus on the 'This is Durham' brand.
 - (d) The future marketing plans of VCD and identify any future challenges in marketing County Durham as a tourism destination.
 - (e) A case study of a recent marketing campaign undertaken by VCD (VCD's national marketing campaign).

- (f) Examine with representatives from key visitor economy businesses their views on the work undertaken by VCD in marketing County Durham.
- 3 A review group of ten members was established from the membership of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Evidence was gathered over a period of six meetings with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee attending a meeting of the Visit County Durham Board on the 23 June 2015.
 - 4 The report was considered by Cabinet at the meeting on the 21 October, 2015. At that meeting Cabinet agreed the recommendations contained within the review report which included a recommendation for a six monthly update on the progress against the recommendations contained in the report. In addition the report was shared with the Board of Visit County Durham at the meeting on the 24 November, 2015.

Recommendations of Review

- 5 The review made the following recommendations:
 - (a) In relation to the partnership approach to marketing, VCD seeks to extend its work with partner destinations and the Durham Strategic Marketing Partnership using major events to attract out of region visitors to raise the profile of the county as a visitor destination.
 - (b) That VCD continues to develop and redesign the 'thisisdurham.com' website and ensure that it remains responsive to the increasing and changing information demands resulting from developments in social media applications.
 - (c) That VCD continues to research and identify national marketing campaign opportunities which benefit partners within the DSMP and promote County Durham as a tourism destination.
 - (d) VCD ensures that robust performance targets and monitoring procedures for all online and offline marketing activity are in place.
 - (e) That the performance evaluation of the effectiveness of marketing activity undertaken in relation to the national marketing campaign is promoted and reported to the County Council as part of its performance management process.
 - (f) That VCD maximises all identified future marketing opportunities for 2015/16 including:
 - The use of major events and developments at attractions in County Durham.
 - The Northern Futures Fund, a new source of funding which promotes northern destinations to overseas markets.

- Championing as a future priority with the NECA the importance of the tourism related economy.

(g) That a review of this report and progress made against the recommendations will be undertaken six months after the report is considered by Cabinet.

Current position

- 6 The attached Action Plan (Appendix 2) provides information on the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the scrutiny review report.

Next steps

- 7 The Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the systematic review process will receive a further update of progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the scrutiny review report at a future meeting of the committee.

Recommendations

- 8 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and comment upon the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the Scrutiny Review report.
- 9 That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further report detailing progress made against the recommendations contained in the scrutiny review report at a future meeting.

Background papers:

Tourism marketing activity undertaken by Visit County Durham Scrutiny Review Report 2015 and Economy and Enterprise update report 28 June 2016.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing – None

Risk – None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – The necessary Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared concerning the review report.

Accommodation – None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – None

Consultation – None

Procurement – None

Disability Issues – None