

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
Wednesday, 4th April, 2012

Present:- Councillor Whysall (in the Chair); Councillors Andrews, Atkin, Beaumont, Dodson, Gilding, Gosling, Johnston, Middleton, Read, Sims and Swift.

Together with co-opted members:- Mr. Derek Corkell and Mr. Brian Walker.

Apologies for absence had been received from:- Councillors Ellis, Falvey, Havenhand, Pickering and Rushforth and co-opted members Messrs. Carr and Hartley and Parish Councillor Jepson.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest to record.

42. QUESTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

There were no members of the public or the press present at the meeting.

43. COMMUNICATIONS.

Nothing was raised under this item.

44. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION HELD ON 22ND FEBRUARY, 2012.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd February, 2012, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

45. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC.

Resolved: - That item 9 be considered in the absence of the press and the public as being exempt under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended March 2006) (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular individual (including the Council)).

46. TOURISM IN YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER.

Justin Homer, Local Government Yorkshire and Humber, was welcomed to the meeting. Justin had prepared an update on tourism and related issues within Yorkshire and the Humber.

Consideration was given to the following: -

- **National Tourism Policy: -**

The coalition Government had published a Tourism Policy in March, 2011, that

positioned tourism as a central part of local economic growth ambitions. The Policy envisaged a key role for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), and new "Destination Management Organisations" (DMOs) to provide strategic leadership over both destination marketing and management. The Government was supporting a £100m marketing campaign co-funded with private sector partners, including airlines, hoteliers and booking operators.

The overall aim was to attract an additional four million visitors to Britain, which was projected to bring an additional £2billion into the economy and see the national creation of 50,000 jobs. The Policy also aimed to increase the number of internal holidays taken by UK residents to match the number of those taken abroad. This would mean that 29% of holidays would be taken within the UK, as opposed to 20% now. The scope of this aim included targets for longer (four plus days) and shorter stays.

An aspiration within the Policy was to become one of the top five most efficient and competitive visitor economies in the world.

- **Yorkshire and Humber: Context & Implications: -**

The market share of international visits to Yorkshire and the Humber had increased in the nine months to September 2011 by 12%, compared to a 4% increase in the national average. There was also an increase in length of stay for international visitors. Footfall at Yorkshire and Humber attractions had also increased.

There was evidence to suggest that the campaigns run by Welcome to Yorkshire (WtY) were contributing to these increases. WtY had been acknowledged as an example of best practice in terms of private sector linkages and campaigns within the Coalition Government's Policy. However, following the closure of the Regional Development Agencies, there were sustainability implications for the regionally-based tourism organisations.

- **Welcome to Yorkshire and local government: -**

WtY had received annual funding from Yorkshire Forward, which ceased at the end of the 2011/12 financial year. From April, 2012, this meant that the organisations would need to be self-financing. Current and future funding streams were considered and it was noted that a proportion of the organisation's funding had been received from local authority subscriptions. Local authorities could also opt to fund local or sub-regional campaigns.

- **Increasing LEP leadership of tourism in Yorkshire and Humber: -**

The activities and priorities of the Sheffield City Region, Leeds City Region and Humber Local Enterprise Partnerships were considered, along with the links the LEPs had with partner organizations.

- **Development of local Destination Management Organisations (DMOs): -**

Councils and National Park Authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber had been asked about the potential role for DMOs within their areas. There did not

appear to be a desire to specifically create new DMOs along the same footprint of the four Yorkshire and Humber LEAs, despite their focus on tourism.

Therefore, it appeared that the establishment of DMOs was taking place on a more local or thematic level. In some areas existing local authority tourism units or visitor marketing teams were being merged to effectively create new local DMOs. In other cases specific new partnerships were being created at authority level which effectively constituted new local DMOs.

Local areas were also clearly considering what their local tourism “brands” were and recognising the need to work with other local authorities and the private sector on promoting them when such brands were not restricted to any particular administrative boundary, for example, the Moors or Discover Yorkshire Coast. Options around new, specific DMOs to manage these cross-cutting brands were being explored in some areas; and some councils had emphasised that these brands could extend well beyond the region and LEA areas.

There was clearly a varying mix of approaches and concepts of what an effective DMO should be, depending on whether a local authority area is an intrinsic tourism brand in itself, or whether cross-cutting thematic brands are more relevant to its visitor economy. This was in line with the flexible view of what may constitute a DMO, as set out in the Government’s Tourism Policy.

- **Regional Growth Fund support to VisitEngland’s “Growing Tourism Locally” programme**

It was noted that Visit England had secured a £20m Regional Growth Fund bid for a three-year ‘Growing Tourism Locally’ programme. Fourteen partners had been confirmed, and all were in effect local DMOs. Through targeted activity these geographical regions would take part in a wider series of thematic campaigns focusing on countryside, heritage, coastal and business tourism.

Discussion ensued, and the following issues were raised and clarified: -

- Refocusing of Welcome to Yorkshire organisation’s core business in response to decreasing funding streams;
- Television advertising campaigns that had been run by Welcome to Yorkshire;
- Working with private sector partners and organisations.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.

47. ROTHERHAM - THE LOCAL PERSPECTIVE.

Tracy Holmes, Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing, Resources Directorate, was welcomed to the meeting and provided an update presentation to the Improving Places Select Commission about the works that were underway in relation to promoting Rotherham.

The update included: -

- The structure and location of tourism issues within the Corporate

Communications and Marketing team;

- The activities that the team undertook in relation to marketing were: -
 - Organise and support specific events and activities;
 - Visitors' Centre and Box Office;
 - To link with Sheffield City Regional Local Enterprise Partnership, including benefiting from South-Yorkshire initiatives and the South Yorkshire Tourism Advisory Group;
 - Linking with investment initiatives;
 - Capitalisation on investments and other benefits.

Rotherham had links with Welcome to Yorkshire and there were many benefits to this association: -

- Major marketing campaigns, such as London Underground advertisements;
- 'This is Yorkshire' magazine;
- Market intelligence;
- Additional campaigns, strategy and access to funding.

Collaborative work was underway between the Council and Partners: -

- The Rotherham Show;
- Rotherham's Green Spaces;
- Community Stadium;
- Magna;
- Chesterfield Canal Partnership.

One branch of the tourism strategy was to continue works in relation to the Town Centre. This was a dedicated priority for Rotherham's Local Strategic Partnership, and included: -

- Dedicated programme of events;
- Campaigns such as the 'Shop Local' initiative and free parking opportunities;
- Regional awards;
- Exploring joint working with private sector organisations.

Discussion ensued, and the following issues were raised: -

- Considering and promoting the Rotherham 'brand';
- Linkages with Area Assemblies to promote individual areas;
- The role of Elected Members, RMBC Officers and citizens in promoting all of Rotherham's assets;
- Initiation of positive messages;
- Promotion of the new community stadium and Robin Hood airport;
- Rotherham's industrial heritage and the importance of items manufactured here;
- Inclusion of tourist attractions and heritage sites on Rotherham Council's website.

Resolved: - [1] That the information shared be noted.

(2) That the Improving Places Select Commission recommends to the Cabinet that the Council's subscription to Welcome to Yorkshire be maintained.

48. BRONWEN MOSS, SCRUTINY ADVISER.

Councillor Whysall informed the members of the Improving Places Select Commission that this would be Bronwen's last meeting with Improving Places before she left the Authority at the end of April, 2012.

Members of this Select Commission wished to record their thanks to Bronwen for her support over the years, and wished her well for the future.

49. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING:-

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission be held on Wednesday 13th June, 2012, to start at 1.30 pm in the Rotherham Town Hall.