

TOURISM PANEL

**Venue: Town Hall,
Moorgate Street,
Rotherham.**

Date: Monday, 14th September, 2009

Time: 2.00 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following items are likely to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for Absence
4. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th July, 2009 (Pages 1 - 5)
5. Matters Arising
6. Dearne Valley Green Heart Partnership, Sustainable Tourism Project
7. Items raised by Industry Representatives
8. Rotherham Walking Festival 2009 and 2010 (Pages 6 - 10)
Joanne Edley, Tourism Manager, to report.
9. Update on progress of the Visitor Economy and Tourism in Rotherham from April to October 2009 (Pages 11 - 28)
Joanne Edley, Tourism Manager, to report.
10. Quality standards and the policy of promoting assessed accommodation only
For discussion.
11. Heritage Open Days (Pages 29 - 31)
Joanne Edley, Tourism Manager, to report.
12. Mystery Shopper Results for Rotherham Visitor Centre from VisitBritain.
(report attached) (Pages 32 - 41)
Janet Fletcher, Assistant Events and Promotions Manager, to report.
13. Any Other Business
14. Date, Time and Venue for the next meeting
To consider:-

Monday, 30th November, 2009 at 2 p.m. or Monday, 1st February, 2010 at 2 p.m.

TOURISM PANEL
MONDAY, 13TH JULY, 2009

Present:- Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillors Littleboy and St. John.

together with:-

Marie Hayes	Events & Promotions Service Manager
Joanne Edley	Tourism and Marketing Manager
Chris Majer	Policy Officer (International Links)
Anne Grayson	Conference Promotion Co-ordinator
Bernard Jones	South Yorkshire Transport Museum
Matthew Beck	Chief Executive, MAGNA
Julie Williamson	Dearne Valley College
Tom Waldron-Lynch	Hellaby Hall Hotel

12. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Smith, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor J. Austen	
Councillor G. Boyes	
Councillor S. Walker	
Richard Jones	Yorkshire South Tourism
Julie Roberts	Town Centre Manager
Stuart Reaney	Chesterfield Canal Partnership

13. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 1ST JUNE, 2009

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Tourism Panel held on 1st June, 2009.

Resolved:- That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

14. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

15. UPDATE ON CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE INSPECTION JUNE 2009

Marie Hayes, Events and Promotions Service Manager, Culture and Leisure Services, reported on the recent Customer Service Excellence

inspection.

The Service was still awaiting the formal letter which had recommended a pass for Customer Service Excellence.

Reference was made to some partial non-compliances and it was reported that the Service would be drawing up an Action Plan to address these, in readiness for the re-inspection in 12 months time.

Agreed:- That all staff in Culture and Leisure Services be thanked for their hard work towards the inspection and for providing the evidence.

16. UPDATE ON ROTHERHAM WALKING FESTIVAL 29TH JUNE TO 5TH JULY, 2009

Joanne Edley, Tourism and Marketing Manager for Culture and Leisure Services, reported on the Walking Festival which had taken place over one week from 29th June to 5th July, which had attracted 700 participants.

Consultation questionnaires had been distributed and the replies were still being collated for analysis. Further questionnaires needed to be collected from Creswell Crags Heritage Centre and RSPB Old Moor both of which had hosted a walk.

It was anticipated that a collection to raise money for the Mayor's charity would be in the region of £100.

The Festival programme had comprised 37 walks, together with a walk organised by the Friends of Ulley Country Park.

The Visitor Centre had sold tickets for the Boots and Boats events organised by the Chesterfield Canal Partnership. Unfortunately 2 walks had to be cancelled due to lack of take up.

Also only one person expressed an interest in the Photographic walk from MAGNA and this event was cancelled. The interested person was offered free entrance into MAGNA. Matthew Beck, Chief Executive, MAGNA added that the event would be run again over the summer linked to the Blackburn Meadows Wildlife area and to the Photographic Exhibition at MAGNA.

Reference was also made to the ABLE project, associated activities organised by Children and Young People's Services, and to future continuing funding.

Reference was made to future funding for the Walking Festival and it was pointed out that once its future had been decided a bid would have to be made to the Council's Communications Central Pot for October.

Agreed: (1) That the good participation level at this year's Walking

Festival be noted

(2) That the results of the analysis of the consultation responses about the Walking Festival be reported to the next meeting of this Panel.

(3) That an options paper be presented to a future meeting of this Panel in respect of the future of the Walking Festival.

17. SUGGESTION OF A VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY AND MARKETING GROUP FOR ROTHERHAM

Joanne Edley, Tourism and Marketing Manager for Culture and Leisure Services, referred to changes in the national, regional and sub-regional tourism structures which influenced the decision last year regarding the holding of the development of a Visitor Economy Strategy.

It was pointed out that this meant that there was no official Tourism Plan agreed either by the Council or the industry.

It was explained that this document was now needed for October in order to bid into the central pot.

It was suggested that a special meeting of selected members of the Tourism Forum be called in September to provide input into this document.

Agreed: That a special meeting of the Tourism Panel be arranged in September to assist in the production of a Visitor Economy Strategy.

18. UPDATE FROM THE TOURISM FORUM MEETING HELD ON 6TH JULY, 2009 AT THE TROPICAL BUTTERFLY HOUSE

Joanne Edley, Tourism and Marketing Manager for Culture and Leisure Services, reported on the meeting of the Tourism Forum which was held on 6th July at the Tropical Butterfly House, North Anston, which was attended by 25 representatives.

The Forum members were given a tour to showcase the developments at the centre over the past 12-18 months.

Forum Members had been asked to complete a questionnaire about the format of meetings etc. The results indicated that Forum Members considered meeting 3 times a year was sufficient.

It was suggested that a link with the Tropical Butterfly House and St. Quentin be investigated.

The Panel was also informed that CBeebies was also filming at the Butterfly House during week commencing 5th July.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following items were reported:-

- (i) South Yorkshire Transport Museum had moved into the adjoining unit and had therefore doubled its space. This meant that more space was available now for display. The exhibits were being re-organised and it was hoped to have an opening ceremony in October.

The Council's support, and that of the people of Rotherham, for the Museum was acknowledged.

- (ii) Invitation from Riesa

Joanne Edley, reported that an invitation had been received from Riesa to go to an event 24th to 28th September. Options to staff and fund a tourism and leisure related exhibition stand were being put forward and discussion was taking place with the International Links Officer. In put from staff at Yorkshire South Tourism was also being invited.

Reference was made to forthcoming events in association with the Rotherham Schools Music Service at Rotherham Minster, at Wombwell and at Hellaby.

- (iii) Events at MAGNA

Matthew Beck added that Rat Race was being filmed by Channel 4 at MAGNA. This was an event which involved extreme running. The event would also link to Rother Valley Country Park (where it was noted that the train tracks were being laid).

- (iv) Dearne Valley College

Julie Williamson reported that in response to the industry and sector skills council requirements the College had now developed a Foundation Degree in Travel and Tourism, which can be accessed on a part time or on a single modular basis by industry employees.

- (v) Big Screen Events

Reference was made to: La Traviata – which had attracted an audience of 300 people

15th July – Barber of Saville

20. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Agreed: That the next meeting of the Tourism Panel be held on Monday,

14th September, 2009 ay 2.00 p.m. at the Town Hall, Rotherham.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Tourism Panel
2.	Date:	2nd November 2009
3.	Title:	Rotherham Walking Festival 2009 and 2010 proposals
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

The Rotherham Walking Festival was held 29th June to 5th July 2009.

It has been suggested that the 2010 event dates change in the future to be earlier in May or June.

6. Recommendations

The report be received and the contents noted by members.

The next Rotherham Walking Festival to be held from 8th May to 16th May 2010.

Tourism Panel support the bid to the centralised marketing budget for the 2010 Walking Festival promotional activity.

7. Proposals and Details

Rotherham Walking Festival is an annual event held in July since 1999. For the event in 2009, it was decided that due to resources being reduced the event duration be changed to one week.

7.1. 2009 Event

In 2009, 37 walks were organised hosting over 700 participants. Of the 37 walks that were organised 7 were new routes of interest to encourage existing customers to become repeat visitors and encourage new participants to the event.

The promotional campaign included distribution of 7,000 leaflets through the Primary Care Trust, the tourist information centre network, libraries, local attractions and accommodation outlets. Local PR and specific targeted marketing was undertaken through walking magazines and direct mail to 3,000 people on the mailing list.

The Walking Festival is evaluated through consultation with the participants. This is undertaken on an annual basis and the results are used to plan the Walking Festival in the future. A response rate of 49% was achieved from participants at the Walking Festival.

When customers were asked how they found out about the Walking Festival; 61% responded the leaflet, 3% the press, 1% the website, 10% obtained information from Rotherham Visitor Centre and the remaining 21% from other sources. Some of those who responded "other" indicated that they had found out about the festival through word of mouth, history group, friends and family, walking groups and the green spaces brochure.

60% of participants were from the local area of Rotherham, 25% were from South Yorkshire and 15% from other areas including; Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, North Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire.

85% of respondents indicated that if there was a Walking Festival in 2010 they would attend.

Over 96% of respondents said that their walk was good or better. The report results show high satisfaction levels with the event with 70% excellent and 26% good. There were only four people who thought their chosen walk was poor and one who thought that theirs was very poor. Investigations are to be undertaken to see if the customers' experience could be improved on the specific walks that had been deemed below a good level of satisfaction with the individual walk leaders.

The equalities questions indicated a higher number of participants were female, 5% indicated that they were disabled. The greatest proportion of the respondents to the survey indicated that they were aged fifty five to sixty four at 33% and 31% were sixty five or older. 13% indicated that they were in the forty five to fifty four age range, thirty five to forty four years 6%, twenty five to thirty four years 2% and under twenty five years 4%.

85% of respondents classified themselves as being White British, other ethnic origins were identified as White Irish, White and Asian, Mixed race background or Other White background.

The Boats and Boots Extravaganza at Kiveton Park, which encompassed a walk with a canal trip along the Chesterfield Canal was once again held this year, over two days. The volunteers have indicated that in 2010, it will be difficult for them to deliver a Boats and Boots programme from Kiveton Park, but may undertake a general walk along the canal if the event is not held in July.

7.2. Proposed 2010 Event

In 2010, it has been suggested that the dates of the Walking Festival be brought forward to May or early June. Staffing levels and resources for Tourism in 2009 were reduced and the event was organised in a different way. To be able support the volunteers more effectively and provide a service to cut back the growth on the public rights of way used for the event, and have a comprehensive programme of activity, a change of dates has been considered.

If the event is changed to May this will enable Public Rights of Way to be involved in the festival programme and undertake any necessary cutting back of the routes. It will also allow the Green Spaces Rangers to take part, as in late June and in July they are busy with group visits from schools and preparing for the summer holiday programmes.

A letter and email has been sent to all the volunteer walk leaders and organisations who have been involved in the walking festival in the past to ask if changing the dates would cause them or their organisations any problems.

Positive responses have been received from most walk leaders offering to adapt to the change in dates and that it would not cause them any problems to do so unless it clashed with other walking festivals they are involved with and if they were given enough notice to arrange the dates in their programming.

Dates of walking festivals in surrounding areas have been requested from the organisers and are listed below:

Lincolnshire	30 th May to 6 th June
Sheffield	30 th May to 6 th June
Barnsley	May
Peak District Border Country changed from June to	15 th to 23 rd May
Bassettlaw	Not confirmed dates
Doncaster	Not confirmed dates

It is advisable to avoid the Bank Holidays as previous walking festivals in other areas have experienced low visitor numbers on these dates. Walk leaders have also indicated that they would prefer it if the Spring Bank Holiday week not be included in the dates.

In Rotherham, walks that are planned for 2010 include Rotherham Round Walk which was planned for 2nd May and they are willing to change dates to another weekend in May. Rotherham Hospice has a midnight walk planned for 19th June, but

they have indicated that they may organise an additional day time walk if the festival is held in May. We are awaiting information from Blue Bell Wood regarding their plans for 2010.

Organisers of the walking festivals in the other areas have been asked if they would consider promoting and organising boundary walks in their festivals and all have indicated that it may be possible subject to arrangements with the volunteers and people working on the event.

Public Rights of Way and the Ranger Service have suggested that May will be a better month to host the walking festival from a resources point of view in the future.

It has been suggested that the walking festival programme be included in the Green Spaces events brochure. This option will be investigated and costs sought for individual brochures and a joint publication. The promotion of the walking festival is dependent on the pooled council promotional budget. Direct mail will be undertaken with both mailing lists attracting hopefully more people to the events throughout the year.

Investigations will be undertaken to see if reciprocal promotional arrangements can be put in place with other walking festivals in the surrounding area.

8. Finance

In 2009, the Walking Festival was financed from the central promotional budget. The walks were lead by Volunteer Walk Leaders, and some officers from within the Council's Rights of Way and Green Spaces Units. The walks were also supported with first aid staff from within Environment and Development Services and volunteers. NHS Rotherham funded a first aid course for volunteers of the walking festival, which was delivered by the St. John's Ambulance Service.

In 2010, the Walking Festival promotional activity is subject to the agreement of the Strategic Communications and Marketing Group.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

51% of the participants chose not to complete the consultation surveys and may have a different opinion to the participants who completed the questionnaires. Some participants may have taken part in more than one walk and skewed the results on the consultation slightly.

The Walking Festival Programme is co-ordinated by the Tourism and Marketing Manager in the Events and Promotions Service and dependent upon volunteer walk leaders and first aid back up from Council employees or volunteers for the programme to be successful.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Walking Festival is based upon priorities within the Corporate Plan, Regeneration Plan, Community Strategy, and has taken into consideration RMBC priorities for Equality and Diversity.

The Rotherham Walking Festival has been included in the Obesity Plan by NHS Rotherham.

The Walking Festival improves and promotes the image of Rotherham. The event includes the priority of sustainability and it is essential that all tourism related promotions and developments are sensitive to the local community, benefits the local economy and environment.

The event promotes the enhancement of public transport and access to the public rights of way and public open spaces.

The festival incorporates learning and walks of interest including local wildlife and open spaces, promotes healthier lifestyles and cultural events in the borough.

The Walking Festival was utilised for the submission of the Council's Beacon Status application for Open Spaces.

Background Papers and Consultation

Rotherham Walking Festival Consultation Draft Report 2009

Responses to letters and emails from walk leaders and organisers regarding the proposal to change the event dates of the festival in the future.

Contact Name :Joanne Edley Tourism and Marketing Manager, ext.6891

email: Joanne.edley@rotherham.gov.uk

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Tourism Panel
2.	Date:	2nd November 2009
3.	Title:	Review of the Tourism Service delivery of the Draft Visitor Economy Plan April 2009 to October 2009
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

The Rotherham Tourism Plan 2005 – 2008 was utilised until 2008.

The Draft Visitor Economy Plan was compiled, but not officially agreed, due to changes in tourism organisations at a national, regional and sub-regional level. Therefore the Draft Visitor Economy Plan actions have been used as a basis for work in 2008/09 and from April 2009.

5. Recommendations

The update from April 2009 to October 2009, be received by Members.

7. Proposals and Details

The Draft Visitor Economy Plan 2008 – 2013, Action Plan was compiled, but not agreed by the Council and the partners, due to the long time it would be implemented and changes in the National, Regional and Sub Regional delivery of tourism pending. VisitBritain have agreed the 10 objectives for their strategy, VisitEngland are developing their strategy, Yorkshire is changing the way Tourism is delivered through the Area Tourism Partnerships and the Tourist Board has changed to Welcome to Yorkshire. A Business Plan for Yorkshire South has just been completed. The Rotherham Visitor Economy Plan will be completed in the future taking all this information into consideration.

In the meantime the Draft Visitor Economy Plan for Rotherham has been used as a basis for the Tourism Service to work with partners to deliver a programme of activity for the year.

The Action Plan with the progress to date is attached at Appendix 1.

The Economic Impact Studies have been completed for 2007. We have three figures to work on from the three separate economic models. Therefore it has been agreed to use the Cambridge Model figures or the Welcome to Yorkshire Economic Impact Information for the Economic Impact of the Visitor Economy for Rotherham in the future.

The performance indicator was to raise the economic impact of the value of tourism by 5% annually, which had been achieved from the Tourism Plan 2005 -2008 through the STEAM Model compiled by Global Tourism Solutions. The Cambridge Model has been adjusted and cannot be used as a comparison year on year until now. The Sheffield Hallam University figure is an estimate from the South Yorkshire Figure of £668 million in 2007.

These figures have been obtained in 2008 for 2007, the 2008 figures have not been obtained to date.

Value of the Tourism / Visitor Economy

Economic Impact Model		2007 Figures	Target for 2007	Target in the future	Down Turn Nationally 2009
STEAM	2003 £235.04 million	£312.8 million	10% increase £258.5 million		
CAMBRIDGE	1997 £65 million 2006 £177.7 million	£225 million		5% increase annually	-2.5%
SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY		£668 million for South Yorkshire Estimated £200 million for Rotherham	5% increase annually in Yorkshire 6% South Yorkshire		

Number of Jobs

Economic Impact Model		2007 FTE direct	Target for 2007 5% increase	Actual with additional add on 2007
STEAM	2003 3,077 FTE direct 4,293 FTE with additional add on	3,585	4,507 FTE with additional add on	4,998
CAMBRIDGE	1997 1,974 FTE direct 2,700 FTE additional 2006 3,263 FTE 4,407 FTE additional	3,984	-	5,406

The target for the Visitor Centre is to maintain the footfall at 68,000 annually. Nationally footfall in Tourist Information Centres is generally dropping and in the town centre with the developments the general footfall is lower than previous years. The Visitor Centre estimates to have a footfall figure of 68,000 by the end of March 2010 despite the downturn trends.

8. Finance

The contents of the Review Document of the Actions achieved of the Draft Visitor Economy Plan have been delivered within existing budgets.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The main risk relates to the impact on local performance indicators and Rotherham's contribution to sub-regional arrangements (through the Destination Management Partnership, Yorkshire South Tourism, regional (Welcome to Yorkshire) and national (VisitEngland and VisitBritain).

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Draft Rotherham Visitor Economy Plan links to the Corporate Plan, the Community Strategy and the Regeneration Plan.

The work of the Tourism and Marketing Manager and the Conference Co-ordinator has assisted to improve and promote the image of Rotherham by transforming the image of Rotherham and addressing the negative views both within and outside of the Borough.

The Draft Visitor Economy Plan provides an excellent environment for people to fulfil their potential by enhancing people's skills, confidence, and aspirations to fully participate in and benefit from the regeneration of the area.

The Draft Visitor Economy Plan assists the Rotherham Town Centre Renaissance by enhancing the role and function of the Town Centre and ensuring that it acts as a hub for social, economic and cultural activity for the wider area.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Draft Visitor Economy Plan Actions 2008 -2013.

Contact Name :Joanne Edley, *Tourism and Marketing Manager, ext. 6891 e-mail*
Joanne.edley@rotherham.gov.uk

**Review of the Tourism Service Delivery against the
Draft Proposals for ROTHERHAM
Visitor Economy Plan 2008 – 2013**

Objective 1 / Corporate Theme Proud

Improve the image and perception of the area and to promote Rotherham as a Visitor Destination, to increase the economic impacts of the visitor economy.

Objective 2 / Corporate Theme Achieving

Improve the quality standards of Rotherham's Visitor Economy.

Objective 3 / Corporate Theme Learning

To increase the skills base in the visitor economy associated areas.

Objective 4 / cross cutting theme sustainability / Corporate Theme Achieving and Alive

To implement a Destination Management Plan that follows a sustainable model for the visitor economy.

Objective 5 / Corporate Theme Achieving

Improve the effectiveness of partnership working.

Cross Cutting Theme - Fairness

Objective 1:

Improve the image and perception of the area to promote Rotherham as a Visitor Destination.

Rotherham Alive and Proud

Action to achieve the objective	What has been achieved in April 2009 to October 2009
<p>Produce and implement a marketing plan to deliver the Visitor Economy Plan and provide an increased profile to promote the area locally, sub-regionally and nationally in partnership with other organisations</p>	<p>The marketing plan format would include all the topics in the Draft Visitor Economy Plan 2008 -2013, which had not been formally agreed, therefore this was not completed in a formal text, but delivery of the specific areas has been ongoing.</p> <p>Promotional Material Budgets allocated through the pooled centralised marketing budget</p> <p>Publications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini Guide produced 15,000 copies October 2009 • Walking Festival Brochure June 2009 • On Your Doorstep Leaflet November 2009 • Heritage Open Days Leaflet September 2009 • Accommodation Rates for specific events ongoing • Access Guide – PDF format on the web site added leisure centres 2 hotels applied to be included awaiting assessments by access officer • Tourist Information Point Accommodation Posters October 2009 • Group Travel Inserts to be completed for January 2010 • Translation of Visitor Guide text into French <p>Advertising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking Festival –National Walking Specific Magazines • On Your Door Step Leaflet / vouchers <p>Press Releases</p> <p>Web Site Update</p> <p>Ongoing process, new council web site will be operational from November stitch in to the Destination Management System will hopefully be undertaken when this is completed.</p> <p>Offers through other agencies</p> <p>Informed the industry of promotional opportunities through Yorkshire South Tourism and Welcome to Yorkshire. (Magna, Tropical Butterfly House, RSPB Old Moor, Aston Hotel and Aston Hall Hotel, Old Police House, took up the offers regularly) and VisitBritain.</p> <p>Walking Festival</p> <p>Co-ordinated and promoted the event in 2009</p>

Assist with the delivery of the Yorkshire Tourism Network Business Plan and Yorkshire South Tourism Action Plans	RIDO Conference Co-ordinator has worked at the Yorkshire South Office one day / week undertaking work for the partnership. Events and Promotions - Rotherham Tourism has provided staff to the partnership on a project by project basis e.g. Exhibitions Tatton Flower Show updated information on the Destination Management System Distributed information to the industry on training / workshops/ offers/ opportunities available through Yorkshire South Tourism when requested to do so. Assisted to set up venues for the Bench Marking Research – Magna, Tropical Butterfly House, Rother Valley Country Park Attended business and engagement training days with Welcome to Yorkshire and Yorkshire Forward, to assist businesses
Encourage development of major events at off peak periods to increase visitors to the area and increase overnight stays Organise and promote events to encourage local residents and visitors to see and experience what the Borough has to offer	Met with numerous event organisers and assisted them to know who to contact regarding various aspects of their event organisation / promotion. Co-ordinated information from the assessed accommodation regarding their rates for specific events and sent them on to the event organisers for their customers. E.g. Rother Valley Triathlon, Inland Waterways Event, Heritage Open Days, Walking Festival, Round Walk, Charity Walk Wentworth, Wath Festival, etc.
Destination Bench Marking, Visitor Satisfaction surveys developed regionally, sub-regionally and locally	Yorkshire Forward has agreed to pay for Destination Bench Marking for Yorkshire. In Rotherham four venues were chosen – Tropical Butterfly House, Magna, Rother Valley Country Park and Wentworth Village. (At Wentworth Village it was reported that there were not enough visitors to undertake the survey on the first day, therefore did not include this location in the overall research. Bench marking through Destination Performance UK to compare the service with like for like areas in city group 4. Returned annual survey and await the results.
Work with Yorkshire South Tourism on the Destination Management ICT System to improve e-commerce and book- ability of facilities for visitors to the sub region	The Rotherham Visitor Centre utilise the Destination Management (DMS) ICT system in the Tourist Information Service provision. We are encouraging businesses to update their own information on the system if they are not doing so. A new version of Guest Link for the DMS is available and businesses are being encouraged to go on the workshops to update their own data in the future.
Continue to work with Planning Services on the Reviewed Brown Signage Policy and encourage the policy to be followed	Changes to the policy were sent through to the signage department. The changes may have to be presented to Council members in the future. Latest enquiries for brown signage have been from Wath Rugby Club, The British Canoe Union, which will be based at Wath from March 2010. Enquiries were made re the electronic signage on the motorway.
Assist with Rotherham Gateways Initiative	In 2008/09 The gateways project has not required the assistance of the Tourism service to talk to facilities or venues, but has progressed with the initiative.

<p>Identify initiatives to support the Rotherham Ambassador Scheme and the Yorkshire South Tourism Ambassador Scheme, project rolled out to local FE colleges</p>	<p>Yorkshire South Tourism launched the ambassador scheme at Swinden House, Rotherham.</p>
<p>Increased positive promotional campaigns for local residents in partnership with the private sector, volunteers and trusts.</p> <p>Increased profile through an annual marketing plan to promote the area locally, sub-regionally and nationally in partnership with other organisations</p>	<p>On your Doorstep Campaign – businesses that have signed up to the promotion to date are; Magna, Arts Centre film at the studio, RSPB Old Moor, Tropical Butterfly House, Simply Skate, Ibis, Aston Hotel, Holiday Inn, Superbowl DC Leisure and Rother Valley Country Park. The leaflet will be used from November 2009 to August 2010.</p> <p>Heritage Open Days – 22 venues included in the leaflet. PR coverage was undertaken by RMBC and the volunteers and over 3,000 additional customers were received over the 4 days in the borough.</p> <p>Group Travel, Conference / Meeting Incentive Travel – This work has been through Yorkshire South Tourism to date, group travel inserts are being developed for the Rotherham Group Travel Folder as Yorkshire South will not be undertaking this work in the future.</p>

**Objective 2:
Improve the quality standards of Rotherham's Visitor Economy
Rotherham Achieving**

Action to achieve the objective	What has been achieved April 2009 to October 2009												
<p>Continue to encourage non-assessed accommodation providers to join the National Standardised Assessment Scheme Pre-assessments undertaken prior to full assessment as required Increase the % of inspected properties from 54% to 70% by end 2009 and increase and maintain in line with sub-regional, regional and national priorities. National Priority 80% by 2012</p>	<p>Good Night Inn Brentwood Hotel – decided not to be assessed Fairways - decided not to be assessed Park Inn - Awaiting information for grant to be issued Horse Shoe Fishing Lake - Environmental Health and Fire Officer arranged to visit, agreed to promote the site after the visits Lord Conyers - decided not to be assessed Spring Vale Caravan Site - Camping and Caravan Club site only Lapsed Welcome Inn - Cost too high for return Holiday Inn - Internal assessments Faris's - Costs too high for return Ceased to operate as accommodation Moulders Rest Netherleigh Environmental Health Services are preparing a report regarding Camping and Caravan Sites new regulations to be presented to the Council in 2009. 21 non assessed properties (46%) 24 Assessed through Quality in Tourism or AA, Camping and Caravan Club (54%)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="824 874 1724 1007"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>National assessed</th> <th>Rotherham assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Serviced (Guest)</td> <td>46%</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Self Catering</td> <td>56%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hotels</td> <td>80%</td> <td>71%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		National assessed	Rotherham assessed	Serviced (Guest)	46%	25%	Self Catering	56%	100%	Hotels	80%	71%
	National assessed	Rotherham assessed											
Serviced (Guest)	46%	25%											
Self Catering	56%	100%											
Hotels	80%	71%											
<p>Encourage attractions to be included in the Visitor Attraction Quality Service or Green Flag Scheme</p>	<p>3 Attractions and 3 parks are in the Green Flag Scheme South Yorkshire Transport Museum has had the information to be assessed.</p>												
<p>Develop a plan to encourage spa facilities to be included in the Spa Accreditation Scheme</p>	<p>The two spas in the area, provide with information but not assessed</p>												
<p>Maintain the information contained and the Sub Regional Destination Management System, which is networked regionally and nationally</p>	<p>This is an ongoing process and it is essential that the businesses are involved in the processes to be able to update their own information in the future through Guest Link.</p>												
<p>Continue a support scheme for Rotherham tourism sector to be in the National Accessible Scheme and comply with the Disability Discrimination Act Access statements completed by all organisations promoted through Rotherham Tourism Service</p>	<p>2 requests have been received to be included in the access guide, Carlton Park Hotel and Park Inn Hotel. The Access Officer is to undertake visits to ensure the information is correct before being included in the guide.</p>												

Continue to review the Business Plan of the Visitor Centre and maintain high quality standards Aim for customer service excellence	The Business Plan for the visitor centre has been reviewed and the actions undertaken Customer Service Excellence June 2009 for Environment and Development Services the Visitor Centre and Tourism were identified as examples of good practice.
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Objective 3:

To increase the skills base in the visitor economy

Action to achieve the objective	What has been achieved in 2008 / 09
Actively promote relative courses of study to people in the industry and community for the Visitor Economy (Leisure / Tourism / Events / Hospitality / Catering)	Training is provided by a number of agencies for the full time students – school, Further Education Colleges, Universities, for employees working in the industry there are a number of NVQ's, Apprenticeships, workshops, training sessions provided by a number of organisations. The Tourism Service sign post the industry to relevant agencies that supply the training and offer assistance to the delivery agencies, Business Link workshops have been recommended to numerous businesses since April 2009.
Develop partnership opportunities with training providers such as schools, colleges of further education, universities, People 1 st , Learning Skills Council, Business Link, Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, Rotherham Ready, Investors in Education Project	Good relationships have been developed between RMBC Tourism Team, Yorkshire South Team, Welcome to Yorkshire who provide workshops and RMBC Tourism Service informs the industry when required. Business Link informs the service of training workshops and this information is provided to relevant establishments. Started to work more closely with Sheffield Hallam University students and lecturers in 2008/09.
Establish and train a pool of local volunteers who are able to assist at events, festivals and guiding at attractions Utilise the guides that have been trained locally in 2008 at Clifton Park Museum Olympics / Major events training	This has not been pursued in 2009
Provide placements for students on work experience on courses related to the visitor economy within the area To ensure that businesses in the area receive information on the skills shortages training courses being developed by YTB, RCAT, Dearne Valley College COVE and the Hospitality COVE	Provided placements for Wickersley School, RCAT Dinnington site, Thomas Rotherham College, Dearne Valley College Students through out the year. Work Placement project through International Links from St Quentin Sent information of international students who wished placements long term to the industry contacts.
Encourage industry representatives to be part of the Local Hero scheme to promote vocational qualifications in South Yorkshire	Tourism Manager has been included on the Local Heroes scheme to promote vocational qualifications.
Encourage the use of the UK Skills Passport	No progress to date – this will be pursued through Welcome to Yorkshire in the future

Objective 4

To implement a Destination Management Plan that follows a Sustainable Model for the Visitor Economy

Rotherham Achieving, Rotherham Proud, Rotherham Alive, Sustainability, Fairness

Some of the actions are duplicated in other sections the contents follows the contents for a Destination Management Plan that is effective

Action to achieve the objective	
1a) Visitor Satisfaction- Destination Bench Marking surveys 1a) Visitor Satisfaction – Yorkshire as a region by visitors Businesses and Tourism Service to take note of results and implement changes accordingly	Yorkshire Forward has agreed to pay for Destination Bench Marking for Yorkshire. In Rotherham three venues were chosen – Tropical Butterfly House, Magna, Rother Valley Country Park (results have been sent though the survey is not a public document).
1a) Visitor Satisfaction Rotherham Visitor Centre	Annual Visitor Centre Customer Satisfaction Survey is undertaken and results are used to undertake an action plan to improve the services for the following year.
1a)Customer Satisfaction – Businesses with the tourism service locally	Annual survey in June only 15 returns from the 100 surveys sent out, therefore the results are not robust to publicise, but have been used to inform work of the Tourism and Marketing Manager
1b) Local Economic Impact – STEAM MODEL	Figures were obtained in 2008 for 2007
1b) Local Economic Impact – CAMBRIDGE MODEL	Figures were obtained in 2008 for 2007
1b) Local Economic Impact on the sub-region, new model to be developed Work with the SYDMP, Welcome to Yorkshire and Yorkshire Futures, Sheffield Hallam University, on the proposal to develop a regional robust volume and value from tourism activity	The bench marking survey undertaken by Welcome to Yorkshire will be used to develop a more robust value and volume analysis of the visitor economy in Yorkshire.
Utilise research to reduce seasonal fluctuations and aim to extend off - peak tourism through major events / promotions	Met with numerous event organisers and assisted them to know who to contact regarding various aspects of their event organisation / promotion. Co-ordinated information from the assessed accommodation regarding their rates for specific events and sent them on to the event organisers for their customers e.g. Rother Valley Triathlon, Inland Waterways Event, Heritage Open Days, Walking Festival, Round Walk, Charity Walk Wentworth, Wath Festival, Thorpe Salvin Garden Trail, Food and Drink Festival, Magna etc. (Duplicated information from above)

1c) Community Attitudes Address community attitudes within Visitor Management Plans where relevant e.g. Wentworth Community Plan, Visitor Economy Plan Tourist Information provision improved in Wentworth Transport links investigated	No further meetings have been arranged at Wentworth since March 2009
1c) Community Attitudes Perception Study undertaken through Reach Out 18 Survey	Reach Out Survey undertaken in 2008. Results available, action plan to improve the results through local residents campaign and partnership work with individual attractions has started in 2009.
1d) Carrying Capacities – Surveys in honey pot areas – undertaken as required	No work undertaken Welcome to Yorkshire could not undertake the bench marking surveys in Wentworth village as they reported that there were not enough visitors to undertake the survey, most people were local.
2a) Develop Visitor Management Plan of key components of overall strategy / plan Consultation with the industry Assist in reducing the adverse impacts and increase the benefits of tourism in honey pots such as Wentworth Village identified in their Plan	Work needs to continue with Wentworth Parish Planning Group and Wentworth Fitzwilliam Estates to progress any ideas and suggestions for the future.
2b) Tourism Partnerships Rotherham Tourism Forum Meet three times / year Direct mail by post and email Specific workshops for topics of interest	Tourism Forum met at the Tropical Butterfly House and the next meeting is planned to be held at the new Park Inn Hotel at Wath after the opening in November 2009.
2b) Tourism Partnerships Tourism Panel meet approximately 8 times / year, Includes 6 Industry representatives and 6 council members	The Tourism Panel has continued to meet and discuss Tourism / Visitor economy issues for Rotherham
2b) Tourism Partnerships Yorkshire South Tourism	The Rotherham Tourism Service and RIDO Conference Co-ordinator have worked with Yorkshire South Tourism in 2009 on various projects. The conference co-ordinator works for the partnership one day per week. The Tourism and Marketing Manager and the Conference Co-ordinator have informed the industry of updates when requested by YST.
2b) Tourism Partnerships Yorkshire Tourism Network / Welcome to Yorkshire	The Rotherham Tourism and Marketing Manager has attended relevant meetings and encouraged businesses to be partners of Yorkshire South Tourism and Welcome to Yorkshire
2c) Micro-businesses Importance of small businesses needs to be reflected in the Visitor Economy Plan and link to the Economic Plan 2008 -2020	SMEs are given advice by the Tourism Service and sign posted to relevant organisations which will assist them. Set up of SMEs is very important for the Visitor Economy. In 2008 one self-catering property set up and in 2009 it is proposed that a further 2 to 3 self catering properties will start

Aim to increase number of SME's in visitor economy	operating. Park Inn Hotel will open November 2009 The British Canoe Union will open the facilities at Wath March 2010
2c) Micro-businesses Promote the importance of sustainability issues through the Green Business Scheme and environmental certificates, VisitBritain's Green Start Programme	Best Western Elton Hotel obtained a silver award in the Green business scheme
2d) Land Use Planning for Tourism Utilise the Good Practice Guide for Planning for Tourism adopted by the Tourism Panel and Planning Board in 2007 Ensure that new developments add to the attractiveness of the Borough and do not substitute or displace existing provision without good reasons, work with planning services on the Local Development Framework areas of land use for the visitor economy in the future	The Good Practice Guide for Planning for Tourism is utilised by Tourism Services, Planning Services for the Development of the Borough
2d) Land Use for Planning for Tourism Adapt the survey undertaken by consultants on behalf of Yorkshire South Tourism on accommodation in the sub-region to inform the development of accommodation in the future and inform the local development framework	The accommodation study report was completed and reported to Tourism Panel, Planning Board and will be utilised to inform the Local Development Framework, planning applications and development applications in the future. A few developers have approached planning re sites for accommodation in the past 6 months. Full applications have not been submitted and granted to date. One application may be submitted soon with regard to a mixed use site involving accommodation. One accommodation establishment has applied to extend the existing facilities.
2d) Land Use for Planning for Tourism Participate in consultations and ensure that the Bio Diversity Action Plan is referred to when planning applications are consulted upon Advise and assist where appropriate, on development	The Bio Diversity Action Plan information is given to Planning Applicants, through Planning Services. Green Spaces Team have a Bio Diversity Officer who can offer services to developers who do not have the expertise to undertake their own survey work for planning applications and developments.
2e) Visitor Management Take part in survey work – implement actions in Visitor Management Plan e.g. Wentworth and possibly Yes project and Boston Castle Yorkshire Survey	The Visitor Bench marking survey was not carried out at Wentworth as the survey company said there were not enough visitors in Wentworth, mainly locals. Yes project is ongoing Boston Castle project is at the 2 nd stage of the Heritage Lottery Funding Bid

<p>2f) Raise Quality Standards Raise awareness through visitor information material, marketing material, marketing campaigns and e-business</p>	<p>Quality standards are addressed in the objective Continue to encourage non-assessed accommodation providers to join the National Standardised Assessment Scheme Pre-assessments undertaken prior to full assessment as required Increase the % of inspected properties from 54% to 70% by end 2009 and increase and maintain in line with sub-regional, regional and national priorities. National Priority 80% by 2012</p>
<p>2f) Raise Quality Standards Private sector to participate in relevant quality scheme e.g.VAQAS - attractions QIT /AA - accommodation Green Flag - parks Spas and Access VisitBritain Official Partner Status – Tourist Information Centres</p>	<p>There has been no further progress on attractions being assessed from April 2009 to October 2009.</p>
<p>3a) Business Support and Training Visitor Satisfaction Survey to analyse standards</p>	<p>Rotherham Visitor Centre Survey and How's the Service Surveys undertaken annually</p>
<p>3b) Business Support and Training How's Business Survey locally (Yorkshire Tourist Board and Yorkshire South Tourism) Identify training needs Distribute training information to the industry through the Tourism Forum Advise and assist where appropriate, on developments How's the Service Research</p>	<p>Yorkshire South Tourism and Welcome to Yorkshire undertake the Performance Monitor Survey, to identify needs. Advice given to potential developers / SMEs as required and sign post to organisations who can assist them How's the service survey undertaken annually</p>
<p>3b) E-Business Promote destination web site to visitors Work with Yorkshire South Tourism on the Links with Destination Management ICT system for increased book- ability to the sub-region Encourage links with partners</p>	<p>The www.visitrotherham.org web site is promoted through all literature produced The Yorkshire South.com website is promoted by Yorkshire South partnership work The Yorkshire.com web site is used for Yorkshire campaigns Investigating the possibility of more links from partner web sites to ours The council web site is being redeveloped and will be ready in November. A stitch in to Yorkshire South Destination Management System has been developed and will hopefully be utilised when the new web site is ready.</p>
<p>3c) Transport Encourage visitors to use alternative forms of public</p>	<p>In all publications public transport is included when possible Group travel marketing campaign has been undertaken through Yorkshire</p>

<p>transport Work in conjunction with the transport unit and providers to encourage sustainable transport options Continue to undertake the group travel marketing campaign with Yorkshire South Tourism</p>	<p>South Tourism Transport information for popular routes has been agreed with South Yorkshire Public Transport Executive to be available in Rotherham Visitor Centre and at local attractions.</p>
<p>3d) Visitor Payback Encourage participation in visitor payback schemes to enable the funding of community schemes and environmental schemes This will assist with local distinctiveness (3f) Being piloted in Yorkshire Dales / used in Lake District</p>	<p>Discussed the possibility of a visitor payback scheme to be introduced at Wentworth with the Wentworth Planning Group waiting to hear if they wish to pursue this any further in the future.</p>
<p>3e) Accessibility -take part in accessibility visits by the access officer. Produce an access guide for visitors which involves the local community undertaking the audits Encourage private sector to be in the National Accessible Scheme, Encourage all organisations to have access statements</p>	<p>2 additional accommodation establishments have applied to be included in the access guide. A visit by the access officer will confirm if the information is correct prior to being included</p>
<p>3f) Local Distinctiveness Encourage more major events to be hosted in the area Promote local events of regional and national interest</p>	<p>Met with numerous event organisers and assisted them to know who to contact regarding various aspects of their event organisation / promotion. Co-ordinated information from the assessed accommodation regarding their rates for specific events and sent them on to the event organisers for their customers. Rother Valley Triathlon, Inland Waterways Event, Heritage Open Days, Walking Festival, Round Walk, Charity Walk Wentworth, Wath Festival, Food and Drink Festival, Magna 2010. The Tourism Service has been moved from Regeneration to Events and Promotions Service and this has enhanced this opportunity.</p>
<p>3f) Local Distinctiveness Encourage the promotion, purchase and use of local produce, crafts, and art by providers</p>	<p>A list of local providers has started to be compiled, but ongoing and not completed ready to provide to the industry to date.</p>
<p>3f) Local Distinctiveness Support the development and maintenance of historical landmarks Maximise grant aid and external sources of funding towards the development of visitor facilities and services – Boston Castle, Townscape Heritage Initiative, All Saints' Minster, Heritage Open Days Promotions</p>	<p>Heritage Open Days was promoted as a Rotherham event in 2009 and attracted approximately 3,000 visitors</p> <p>Culture and Leisure are continuing with the 2nd stage of the Heritage Lottery Funding bid for Boston Castle Clifton Park - Developments have received external funding and are being undertaken Assistance has been given to All Saints' Minster as required floodlighting will be operational from November 2009.</p>

3g) Assess visitor impact when developing the Biodiversity Action Plan and communicate the plan to visitors. Consult with the private sector and community	Bio Diversity Action Plan information is in the Visitor Centre, but not in accommodation / attraction facilities at present
3h) Waste Management. Promote visitor awareness through campaigns and certification Co-ordinate activity with community based initiatives and Yorkshire Forward initiatives Educate Visitors	No work from the Tourism Service, individual establishments have taken this forward if they wished
3i) Sustainability awards and schemes White Rose Award for sustainable tourism to be introduced in 2008 EMAS in the council Green Business Scheme promoted Green Start - VisitBritain	Best Western Elton Hotel have achieved Silver Green Tourism Award
3j) Marketing Produce a marketing plan which includes research, promotion and development in the Events and Promotions Service Plan	This was completed with the Events and Promotions Service and part of the bid to the pooled centralised promotional budget
4) Measure Performance Undertake consultation work for events, industry specific measures including community perceptions and environmental issues Provide advice and support for groups and organisations wishing to organise events in the Borough	Consultation of the Walking Festival and other events undertaken by the council is undertaken. Met with numerous event organisers and assisted them to know who to contact regarding various aspects of their event organisation / promotion. Co-ordinated information from the assessed accommodation regarding their rates for specific events and sent them on to the event organisers for their customers. Rother Valley Triathlon, Inland Waterways Event, Heritage Open Days, Walking Festival, Round Walk, Charity Walk Wentworth, Wath Festival, Food and Drink Festival at Magna 2010.

**Objective 5:
To improve the effectiveness of partnership working**

Action to achieve the objective	
Ensure the involvement of tourism services in all cross cutting service delivery strategies and plans	Tourism is involved with a few document consultations. The latest is the Draft Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009 - 2012. Assisted with International links visits
Continue to sustain the participation in the Rotherham Tourism Panel 8 meetings / year Tourism Panel industry representatives are not just for their own organisations, but represent other organisations in the area Rotherham Tourism Forum 3 meetings / year	Rotherham Tourism Panel has continued and Rotherham Tourism Forum has met at the Tropical Butterfly House and the next meeting is planned to take place at the new Park Inn Hotel at Wath after 16 th November 2009.
Ensure proactive participation in Yorkshire South Tourism Sub-Regional Destination Management Partnership	Rotherham is a partner of the Yorkshire South Tourism Partnership
Develop initiatives with neighbouring local authorities and attractions, when appropriate, on development and promotion of the visitor economy and identify new partnership opportunities as applicable. Invite other representatives from areas outside the Borough to Tourism Forum meetings once a year 2012 Olympic Games collaboration	Chesterfield Canal Partnership Trans Pennine Trail Rotherham Walking Festival 2010 boundary walks a possibility 2012 Olympic Games co-ordination with Sports Development and the Visitor Economy businesses re activity to be undertaken
RMBC to sign up to the Place Making Charter	The Place Making Charter was agreed in principal through the Tourism Panel. A meeting was held in March in Leeds to decide how to take this forward in the future. Progress has been slow and a place making group has been set up nationally, but the next stage actions have not been clear to date.
Meet / provide individual advice and guidance To existing and potential new businesses	Existing businesses / Organisations; Ibis, Holiday Inn, Magna, Good Night Inn Brentwood, Civic Venues, Fusion, Cent, Rother Valley Country Park, Carlton Park Hotel, Clifton Park / Museum, Tropical Butterfly House, Horse Shoe Fishing Lake and Campsite, Spring Vale Campsite, Rotherham United, Aston Hotel, Hellaby Hall Hotel, RSPB Old Moor, Fairways, Winthrop Park, South Yorkshire Transport Museum, Civic Theatre, DC Leisure, New businesses / potential businesses; Moorgate Self Catering Establishments, Park Inn, KC Suite, Matrix, Potential accommodation at Firbeck and another at Thorpe Hesley, Go Consult Go Karting, Canoe Union and Green Heart Partnership – re: Sustainability Tourism Project

Cross Cutting Theme :

Fairness

Complete Equalities Tool kit for Visitor Economy Plan 2009 - 2013	When the plan is completed and agreed this will be undertaken
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Economic Value of the Visitor Economy / Tourism in Rotherham

Economic Impact Model		2007 Figures	Target for 2007	Target in the future	Down Turn Nationally 2009
STEAM	2003 £235.04 million	£312.8 million	10% increase £258.5 million		
CAMBRIDGE	1997 £65 million 2006 £177.7 million	£225 million		5% increase annually	-2.5%
SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY		£668 million for South Yorkshire Estimated £200 million for Rotherham	5% increase annually in Yorkshire 6% South Yorkshire		

Number of Jobs through the Visitor Economy / Tourism in Rotherham

Economic Impact Model		2007 FTE direct	Target for 2007 5% increase	Actual with additional add on 2007
STEAM	2003 3,077 FTE direct 4,293 FTE with additional add on	3,585	4,507 FTE with additional add on	4,998
CAMBRIDGE	1997 1,974 FTE direct 2,700 FTE additional 2006 3,263 FTE 4,407 FTE additional	3,984	-	5,406

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:-	Tourism Panel
2.	Date:-	2 nd November 2009
3.	Title:-	Heritage Open Days September 2009 and 2010
4.	Directorate:-	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

In 2008 the Tourism Service produced a leaflet for Heritage Open Days for the first time and took part in the South Yorkshire Heritage Open Days meetings and co-ordination activity. In 2009 this has been repeated.

6. Recommendations

- That the report be received by members.
- Tourism Panel support the bid to the centralised promotional budget to promote Heritage Open Days in Rotherham 2010.

7. Proposals and Details

Heritage Open Days is a National Event that occurs annually in September. Prior to 2008 the Churches Tourism Initiative in Rotherham took the lead for heritage buildings in Rotherham.

Since 2008, Rotherham MBC Tourism and Marketing Manager has been involved in the promotion of the heritage of the area through co-ordination with venues and volunteers to produce a leaflet for Rotherham for the event and a page on the South Yorkshire Heritage Open Days Web Site.

The event in 2009 was the same weekend as Rotherham Show and it was difficult to gauge if it would be a success or not due to the large event at Rosehill Park at the same time.

From 10th to 13th September the 22 venues that hosted the activities for Heritage Open Days received approximately 3,000 visitors, a similar figure to 2008. The most popular attraction was Swinton St. Margaret's Church, which opened its doors to show off their first flower festival attracting 1,500 people to one venue. All attractions reported a good attendance and were pleased with the support they had received through the Rotherham promotional activity.

Background

Heritage Open Days activities have to be free for the visitors to enjoy. If the attraction offers a paid entry, it should be free or offer a free activity separate to the entrance fee so that it can be included in the programme of activities. The National Event is now co-ordinated through English Heritage.

8. Finance

The Heritage Open Days promotional leaflet and web page were undertaken within financial budgets provided by the centralised promotional budget. A similar bid to the central promotional budget will have to be made for the 2010 event.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

In the future the event is dependent on the volunteers and attractions opening their doors and providing an activity free for visitors to enjoy.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Heritage Open Days contributes to the corporate priorities of Alive and Achieving by providing cultural experiences free of charge for all ages through an event that is important locally and nationally.

Heritage Open Days contributes to the corporate theme of Rotherham Proud by providing an opportunity for local people who volunteer to welcome visitors and local residents to places of heritage and interest.

Heritage Open Days contributes to the cross cutting theme of sustainability by opening the doors of attractions free of charge for visitors and residents. This allows them to see a part of heritage that is not normally available day to day.

It encourages economic vitality through extra spend in the area on additional items.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation was undertaken by telephone post event, with volunteers and attraction providers to obtain the feedback on the visitor numbers and promotional activity.

Contact Name:- Joanne Edley, Tourism Manager, ext.6891,
joanne.edley@rotherham.gov.uk

Rotherham Borough Council – Report to Tourism Panel
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1.	Meeting:-	Tourism Panel
2.	Date:-	2nd November 2009
3.	Title:-	National Mystery Shopper Results for Rotherham Visitor Centre
4.	Directorate:-	Environment and Development Services – Culture & Leisure Service

5. Summary:

Rotherham Visitor Centre is an Official Partner of VisitBritain for the Tourist Information Centres (T.I.C.s) in England. As a result the Service is compared through an annual Mystery Shopper exercise undertaken by VisitBritain alongside over 200 other TICs. The Mystery Shopper exercise ensures that Tourist Information Centres maintain the standards expected by VisitBritain.

6. Recommendations

- The report be received and the contents noted by Members.

7. Proposals and Details

The Rotherham Visitor Centre takes part in an annual mystery shopper exercise to assist with improving the service it provides as identified in the Rotherham Visitor Centre Business Plan.

Information regarding the criteria used by the mystery shopper to judge the service is included in appendix 1.

Results for Rotherham's Mystery Shopper Report

	Rotherham Average 2009
Telephone Enquiry	83%
Face to Face Enquiry/ Interaction by Staff	88%
Email Enquiry	94%
Building	75%
Total Average	85%

The Executive Summary from the report indicates that the email enquiry was an extremely detailed reply and tailored to the enquirer's needs, showing a level of understanding by staff. Also it stated that it was a very good first impression.

The Summary also stated that the telephone enquiry was answered on the second ring, providing a positive first impression for the caller and a very detailed response.

The face to face enquiry summary identifies that the welcome and helpfulness of the member of staff has ensured that the overall rating for Rotherham Visitor Centre is "Very Good".

Recommendations to improve the mystery shopper scores include providing public transport leaflets in the Visitor Centre. This has been agreed with the South Yorkshire Public Transport Executive for popular routes and is now in place.

It is also recommended that the facia and signage of the building be changed in order to be easily identified. However, we will be challenging this recommendation.

It advises that staff encourage the customer to purchase additional services and products when in the area.

The recommendation to have an automated acknowledgement for all email enquiries has budget implications. We are not in a position to adhere to this recommendation at this time. Our aim is to reply to email enquiries within a two hour working time, therefore, the automated acknowledgement is considered an additional service that is not necessary.

Customer Service Excellence (CSE) standard require that the Directorate implements a programme of mystery shopper exercises. In the CSE audit in June 2009 the Visitor Centre was regarded as an example of good practice both by the internal and external mystery shopper.

8. Finance

The Visitor Centre Business Plan, Customer Satisfaction Survey and Mystery Shopper report have been and will be financed in the future within existing budgets.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

If the Rotherham Visitor Centre/Tourist Information Centre Service do not achieve the standards required set by VisitBritain the centre could be withdrawn from the national network and the Official Partner Scheme if the standards remained poor.

Mystery Shopper Reports are dependent upon people's impressions, opinions and the service provided by people. These results are then compared against other services.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Mystery Shopper exercise links to the Visitor Centre Business Plan, which has a completed RMBC Equalities Impact Assessment and includes the Corporate priority of Rotherham Proud by improving and promoting the image of Rotherham.

The Rotherham Visitor Centre supports the Corporate priority of Rotherham Achieving and sustainability by promoting the local visitor economy and the Town Centre. The Service promotes cultural activity, transport options and Rotherham's beautiful countryside.

Rotherham Visitor Centre provides information on history and heritage and welcomes visitors and local people to the area, which supports the Corporate priority of Rotherham Alive.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

The 2009 Mystery Shopper Report by VisitBritain.

Contact Name:- Janet Fletcher, Assistant Events & Promotions Manager, ext. 6945. email: janet.fletcher@rotherham.gov.uk
Joanne Edley, Tourism and Marketing Manager, ext. 6891. email: Joanne.edley@rotherham.gov.uk

Annex A

Visit Report Form

Mystery Shoppers Ltd

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VisitBritain Visit Report

MS Ref No. Agent Initials Scenario type GC

e.g. 27672266

Date Site code Region Code

TIC Time Entered

Scenario

Time Left

Day Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun

Note: Questions marked * are not included in the scoring system

Section A: Outside and Entrance	Comments
<p>A.1 Rate the signage directing you to the TIC <input type="radio"/> Good (Describe any places a sign would be useful) <input type="radio"/> Ok If none seen on the main approaches, especially from nearest car park, tick NONE <input type="radio"/> Poor <input type="radio"/> None</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100%;"></div>
<p>* A.2 As you approached the premises, was the entrance easy to find? <input type="radio"/> No (If No say why) <input type="radio"/> Yes</p>	
<p>* A.3 Was the approach to the premises, surrounding area and car park clean and in good condition? (If No say why) <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes</p>	
<p>A.4 Was the exterior including windows clean and in good condition? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>A.5 Did the window displays give a good impression of this TIC (Leave blank if no windows or displays) <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>A.6 Was the main entrance suitable for wheelchair access? (Doesn't have to have wheelchair sign - must have ramp access if there are steps) <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>A.7 If THERE IS NO wheelchair access at main door was a different wheelchair entrance clearly signed OR a ball to attract attention? (Leave blank if N/A) <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>A.8 Was there parking for disabled persons vehicles? (Anywhere nearby) <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	
<p>A.9 Was there any signage showing you which premises you were entering? (Even if difficult to see or you had to search. If No please comment and go to A.12) <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	

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<p>A.10 If YES, was the signage clearly visible (i.e. helped you find the way in)? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>(If No please comment)</i></p> <p>A.11 Was a sign clear and legible? (Even if difficult to see or you had to search, if No please comment - leave blank if no sign found) <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p>A.12 Were the opening hours clearly visible from outside the entrance when closed? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>(If No please comment - was anything visible?)</i></p> <p>A.13 Was there a telephone number which would be clearly visible from outside when closed? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>(If No please comment - was anything visible?)</i></p> <p>For out-of-hours visitors was there information:</p> <p>A.14 On accommodation with details and prices? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p>A.15 On emergency doctor and dentist? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p>A.16 Was there any external indication that credit cards are accepted? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>
<p>Section B: First Impressions Please check your scenario prior to entering the building Please use crib sheet provided.</p> <p>B.1 On arrival, how busy were the premises? <input type="radio"/> Empty (no other visitors) <input type="radio"/> Quiet (under a quarter full) <input type="radio"/> Average (about half full) <input type="radio"/> Busy (about three quarters full) <input type="radio"/> Very busy (packed)</p> <p>B.2 How many staff did you see? <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>B.3 Were staff easily identifiable (from their clothing or any badges)? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p>B.4 Was there a queue? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>

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<p>* B.5 If there was a queue, please record the number of people in front of you: (Leave blank if not applicable) <input type="text"/></p> <p>* B.6 Did you have to wait for more than 3 minutes? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p>* B.7 Please record your waiting time if no wait enter zero (use the letter c) <input type="text"/></p> <p>B.8 Were you acknowledged verbally or non-verbally shortly after you entered? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p>B.9 If you did have to wait more than 3 minutes or if an apology would have been appropriate, did a staff member apologise? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
<p>(Leave blank if not applicable)</p> <p>B.10 Were you greeted by a staff member? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p>B.11 If YES, was the greeting polite and courteous? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No (If NO, please comment)</p> <p>B.12 Did the staff member smile and make eye contact? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p>B.13 Did you feel welcomed? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No (If NO, please comment)</p> <p>B.14 Was the staff member wearing a visible name badge? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No (If YES, please record their name) (If NO, please describe the person)</p> <p>B.15 Was the staff member well presented? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No (If NO, please comment)</p>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
<p>B.16 Was the TIC clean and tidy? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No (If NO, please comment)</p> <p>B.17 Was the TIC internal decor well-maintained and in good condition? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No (If NO, please comment)</p>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

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<p>B.18 Was the public area free of any obstacles or safety hazards? (If NO, please comment)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.19 Was there a low-level enquiries desk (or split level desk) suitable for wheelchair users?</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.20 Was there a sign showing a hearing aid loop was available for visitors with hearing difficulties (on the door or at the counter)?</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.21 Was there provision to request material available in large print or braille for visitors with impaired vision? (If NO, please comment)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.22 Was there provision to request any audio/ recorded information (tape, MP3 etc) available? (If NO, please comment)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.23 Was any information available in French, German or Italian? (If NO, please comment)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.24 Was there any seating available for infirm visitors?</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.25 Were the leaflet displays well stocked? (If NO, please comment)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.26 Were the leaflet displays tidy? (If NO, please comment)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.27 Was information on local events prominently displayed/ promoted?</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.28 Rate the quality and range of postcards (Please comment)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Good <input type="radio"/> OK <input type="radio"/> Fair <input type="radio"/> None Sold	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.29 Did they sell stamps?</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>

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Wave 1 - 10/07/08

<p>B.30 Rate the quality and range of services (Please comment)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Good <input type="radio"/> OK <input type="radio"/> Poor	<input type="text"/>
<p>B.31 Was public transport information prominently displayed?</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>

Section C: Enquiry

<p>C.1 Did the staff member ask questions to fully establish your needs? (If NO please comment) (Such as will you have children with you?)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>C.2 Did they try to be as helpful as possible? (If NO, please comment)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>C.3 Did they try to help further than just responding to your initial enquiry?</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>C.4 Were they polite and courteous? (If NO, please comment)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>C.5 Did the staff member make it clear how you could get more information (they may give you a leaflet, etc)? (Leave blank if not applicable)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>C.6 Did staff offer saleable items such as tickets for events, attractions or transport</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>C.7 Did staff attempt to sell you any products of local distinctiveness? (Answer NO if they are for sale but no-one tried to sell)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>
<p>C.8 Did the staff member ask if there was any further help they could give you (Leave blank if you don't feel this would have been appropriate)</p>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="text"/>

<p>C.9 Did the staff member give you their full attention? (If NO, please comment)</p> <p>During the conversation did the staff member:</p> <p>C.10 Converse freely and easily with you? (If NO, please comment)</p> <p>C.11 Give you information without prompting? (If NO, please comment)</p> <p>C.12 Responded clearly without jargon? (If NO, please comment)</p> <p>C.13 At the end of the conversation did they ask you for feedback?</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p>
<p>C.14 If YES, was the farewell polite and sincere? (If NO, please comment)</p> <p>C.15 Could you see any opportunity for customers to leave feedback in writing (eg visitor book, questionnaires, feedback form etc)? (If YES, please comment)</p> <p>C.16 Was your question answered: (If NOT FULLY answered, please comment)</p> <p>C.17 Was your question answered efficiently quickly and clearly knowing what they were doing?</p> <p>C.18 Did staff 'sell' the attractions of the area or make the area sound attractive and exciting?</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Fully <input type="radio"/> Partially <input type="radio"/> Not at all</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p>
<p>C.19 Did you feel more positive towards the area as a tourist destination as a result of your visit?</p> <p>C.20 Rate the visit overall (Please comment on why you chose that rating)</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Excellent <input type="radio"/> Good <input type="radio"/> Ok <input type="radio"/> Poor</p>	<p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p>