

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND TOURISM
14th January, 2014**

Present:- Councillor Rushforth (in the Chair); Councillors Andrews and Dalton.

F33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No Declarations of Interest were made.

F34. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2013.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism held on 17th December, 2013, were discussed.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

F35. WELCOME TO YORKSHIRE.

Councillor A. Rushforth, Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism, welcomed Dee Marshall, Head of Communications, Welcome to Yorkshire, and Rotherham Council's Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing, and the Regeneration Manager to the meeting. A presentation had been prepared informing the Cabinet Member on Rotherham's subscription to Welcome to Yorkshire and the benefits that this membership brought to the Council and Rotherham's wider economy.

Further to Minute No. F25 (The Future of Tourism and the Visitor Economy in Rotherham) of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism held on 19th November, 2013, the update that had been prepared for this meeting responded to the agreed actions.

Dee Marshall spoke about the remit of Welcome to Yorkshire: -

- Welcome to Yorkshire worked with twenty-one local authorities across the Yorkshire region. A Service Level Agreement was in place with each local authority, and each paid a subscription to Welcome to Yorkshire;
- Welcome to Yorkshire was 100% funded from member subscriptions;
- The aims of Welcome to Yorkshire were: -
 - The increase the number of people visiting Yorkshire;
 - To encourage the visitors to Yorkshire to spend more money;
 - To encourage the visitors to Yorkshire to stay in the region for longer.
- To accomplish these aims, Welcome to Yorkshire undertook a number of activities: -

- Promotion of Yorkshire;
- Visitor economy infrastructure;
- Working with Visitor Information Centres (previously called Tourist Information Centres);
- Understanding and defining visitors.
- It was estimated that 8 out of 10 visitors to Yorkshire and Yorkshire attractions were from within the County.

Subscriptions: -

- There were differing subscriptions amounts for local authorities, from the minimum of around £10,000 to five-figure sums;
- Rotherham was paying near to the minimum contribution;
- Different Service Level Agreements existed for the different levels of subscription fees;
- Venues and businesses including bed and breakfasts paid a subscription of £200, £400 or £600 depending on their size, which were the lowest fees across the country;
 - The organisations across Yorkshire who had taken this type of subscription numbered in the thousands.
- 44 large organisations, including multi-national banks, paid an annual subscription of £10,000 and were classed as 'Y30' organisations;
- Welcome to Yorkshire operated as a not-for-profit organisation;
- Welcome to Yorkshire contributed the sub-regional Tourism Advisory Boards (North, South, East and West) but other ways of maintaining contact with the organisations who had taken a subscription were being explored.

Rotherham's benefits from being involved with Welcome to Yorkshire: -

- A list of attractions for Rotherham was maintained;
- Rotherham had its own dedicated page on Yorkshire.com which had recently passed the two million views mark. This made it the most visited tourism site outside of London destinations;
- Member organisations also had access to a legal helpline, small businesses were given a cash card machine as part of their membership and Welcome to Yorkshire had organised events in response to emergency issues to support members;
- The publication 'This is Y' was circulated in targeted areas through the Daily Telegraph. This included information about the Rotherham area and Rotherham businesses. Nothing would be included in relation to Rotherham if the Local Authority did not take up a subscription;
- Welcome to Yorkshire also published seasonal mini magazines that promoted all of the activities taking place across Yorkshire each season;

- Welcome to Yorkshire worked with Tourist Information Centres to promote the attractions and facilities of Yorkshire;
- Published stand-alone publications, one recent title had been 'Discover Turners' Yorkshire';
- Liaised with Journalists to encourage them to write features about Yorkshire;
 - A large attraction in Rotherham had been featured in The Sun in what would have been the equivalent of £35,000 of advertising space, which was a clear business benefit and alone outweighed the cost of subscription.
- The 'Days Out' and 'What's On' pages were the most visited areas of Welcome to Yorkshire's website;
- Welcome to Yorkshire had a social media page. Tweets sent by the organisation could be re-tweeted and could result in millions of views. This was a free resource and reached a wide and diverse audience across the globe;
- Rotherham no longer had a dedicated tourism function within its structure. However, the Cabinet Member had previously committed to the Welcome to Yorkshire subscription as way of ensuring elements of this work (including promoting Rotherham) were continuing;
- Welcome to Yorkshire had scaled back their research and data operations in order to concentrate resources on marketing activities following significant reductions in funding.

Discussion ensued on the information presented: -

- How did Welcome to Yorkshire monitor the uptake and benefits of 'This is Y' and the seasonal mini-magazines?
 - The resources were in high demand and all copies were accounted for.
 - Hits on the relevant pages of the website were monitored following publications.
 - The visitor numbers at featured attractions were tracked post publication.
- In addition to its large attractions, Rotherham also had lots of smaller attractions that visitors should be made aware of.
- Visitors to attractions across Yorkshire were not swayed by administrative boundaries, so Yorkshire needed a single organisation that oversaw tourism strategy and promotions.
- Rotherham bordered other counties and consideration should be given to co-ordinating with those areas' Destination Management Organisations.

The Cabinet Member thanked Dee Marshall for her presentation on the benefits of the Welcome to Yorkshire subscription and was pleased that the subscription the Rotherham Local Authority paid was also working to the benefit of all of the individual member organisations across the Borough, in particular advertising space and promotions exposure.

Resolved: - (1) That the information be received and noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member receive continuing updates relating to Rotherham's annual subscription to Welcome to Yorkshire, at the time that the annual Service Level Agreement was negotiated and a six-month progress update.

(3) That the Cabinet Member receive an update on the Local Government Yorkshire and the Humber elected member task group looking at a visitor economy strategy task group, due to meet in early February.

(4) That the Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing update the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the outcome of this meeting.

F36. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE.

The Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing gave an update on communications issues in relation to marketing the Borough.

Issues discussed included: -

- The afore-mentioned elected member task group;
- A recent report by the LGiU in relation to the economic contribution of the tourist industry;
- Welcome to Yorkshire's 2014 conference entitled 'Tour de Force' that planned to look at the official tourism and business focus based on Yorkshire's Grand Depart of the 2014 Tour de France.

Discussion ensued on the information presented. It was agreed that, although attendance was at no-cost, Rotherham would not attend the 'Tour de Force' conference as there would be other expenses associated with attendance, in line with the Council's moratorium on non-essential spend.

Discussion was also undertaken on the Council's social media presence, including the policies governing its use and the added benefit that allowed Members, Officers and others close to communities to circulate useful and important information to their contacts, and how information reached a wider audience at low or no cost.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.

F37. LEISURE AND GREEN SPACES FEES AND CHARGES 2014/2015.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Leisure and Green Spaces Manager (Leisure and Green Spaces, Streetpride, Environment and Development Services Directorate) relating to the

proposed fees and charges for Leisure and Green Spaces' Services during the 2014/2015 financial year.

The Leisure and Green Spaces Manager described the background to the proposed charges. Generally they had been increased by at least the rate of inflation. Where this was not the case, it is either because implementing a price increase would incur additional costs (e.g. for changing ticket machines) or because managers felt that a unit price increase would reduce overall income due to its impact on levels of business. Many Services operated a concessionary rate and, in some cases, a junior Rothercard rate. Concessions were not restricted to off-peak times, which was the case in many other local authorities.

In most cases the proposed charges would take effect on 1st April 2014. However, as indicated in Appendix B, proposed charges for allotments and Rother Valley Country Park water-sports would take effect on other dates. The proposed charges for allotments related to the financial year 2014/15 as legislation required twelve-months' notice to be given of any rent increase. The proposed charges for water-sports would start on 17th February, 2014, when the service starts for the 2014 season.

Discussion ensued on the proposed fees and charges within the submitted report.

Resolved: - That the proposed fees and charges for Leisure and Green Services in the financial year 2014/15, as set out in the detailed report, be approved.

F38. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism take place on Tuesday 18th February, 2014, to start at 10.00 a.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.