

RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 MAY 2021

Report Reference for this Committee: A.2

Key Decision Required:	Yes	In the Forward Plan:	Yes
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CABINET

21 MAY 2021

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBERS FOR LEISURE AND TOURISM

A.3 TOURISM STRATEGY FOR TENDRING

(Report prepared by Mike Carran, Assistant Director Economic Growth and Leisure)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present the Tourism Strategy 2021-2026 and a work programme for the first year to Cabinet for approval.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- At their meeting on 11 September 2020 Cabinet approved the draft tourism strategy to be sent out for consultation for a two month period. Following that process, the final strategy is now presented for adoption;
- This five year plan replaces the previous strategy for Tendring, which expired in 2016;
- Tourism is estimated to be worth more than £402 million to Tendring, and is responsible for over 8,980 jobs, equivalent to 17.9% of the District's employment. To put matters into perspective, tourism has increased in value to the local economy by £115 million since the previous strategy was written in 2010;
- The coronavirus pandemic has impacted significantly on the local tourism industry and this strategy is tailored to extend 'back to business' support towards the recovery of the sector;
- The strategy sets out a 10 point plan for delivery of the following objectives:
 1. *Wealth creation*
 2. *Job creation*
 3. *Quality of life for local people*
 4. *Long term growth of the tourism sector*
- This strategy recognises that Tendring has wide attraction, with its towns and villages all having their own unique features, tourism offer and charm. It is important that the Council works with partners to develop those unique selling points and promotes all of the District's component parts. From beautiful coastlines and visitor attractions, to picturesque countryside and heritage of international significance; the power of Tendring's tourism offer is in the diversity of its

destinations and that should be embraced and marketed accordingly;

- There has been significant private sector investment in the local tourism industry in recent years, including multi million pound investment into some of Tendring's key attractions. This has improved the quality of the District as a visitor destination and demonstrates local confidence and commitment to raising standards;
- The Council has invested in major projects such as the £36m Coastal Defence scheme for Clacton and Holland, creating tangible tourism assets in Harwich for Mayflower 400, is developing a scheme to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Clacton on Sea and public realm schemes to improve the appearance of the District;
- Furthermore, the Council has invested resources into both organising and facilitating an expanding quality events programme in recent years. Building on the success of the nationally recognised Clacton Airshow and Harwich Illuminate, event organisers have felt empowered to bring events of national significance such as The Tour of Britain and the first 'on road' Motor Rally in England and Wales, to the Tendring District;
- The strategy recognises that tourism is a fast moving, agile economy and the Council is one partner in ensuring long term success. As such, this strategy has greater emphasis on the Council's role of facilitation than its predecessor;
- This strategy is accompanied by a work programme for 2021/22, which sets out actions the Council will take to deliver its strategic aims. It is recognised that this work programme is a live document and will adapt to a changing environment.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Cabinet agrees the Tourism Strategy 2021-2026 and the work programme for 2021-2022.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

This strategy will support a number of priorities in the Corporate Plan as set below:

- Promote Tendring's tourism, cultural and heritage offers
- Develop and attract new businesses
- Support existing businesses
- More and better jobs
- Maximise our coastal and seafront opportunities

Further to that, the following opportunities listed in the plan will be impacted upon by the strategy:

- Clear vision for economic growth and prosperity;
- Our coast;
- Tourism, culture and sport.

This strategy compliments the Economic Growth strategy, which was adopted by Cabinet in July 2020.

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance and other resources

Additional funding from the Economic Growth budgets has been made available to fund the delivery plan, as set out in Appendix B.

Cabinet has already committed finance and staffing resource to support tourism promotion and an events programme which includes Clacton Airshow, Mayflower 400 commemorations, Beside the Seaside, Illuminate Festival and Tour de Tendring. Funding has also been secured to provide a new tourism product to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Clacton on Sea.

Further to that, Cabinet have set out their Back to Business Recovery Plan, which includes a number of tourism projects, including seafront improvement schemes across the District.

LEGAL

The proposals are within the Council's powers. The Request for allocation of budget will be in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework, as set out in Part 5 of the Council's Constitution.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder / Equality and Diversity / Health Inequalities / Area or Ward affected / Consultation/Public Engagement.

Area or Ward Affected

The tourism strategy impacts on the entire District.

Health Inequalities

Improving employment opportunities through growing the sector will impact on quality of life of local people.

Consultation/Public Engagement

This strategy has been subject to consultation with private and voluntary sector partners in the local tourism sector, together with Town and Parish Councils. This principles for this strategy was subject to scrutiny by the Resources and Services Committee in July 2018. The recommendations from that committee were as follows:

- (a) the parish and town councils within the District be included as part of the consultation process on the emerging Tourism Strategy; and
- (b) in view of the fact that tourism generates £372million* income for the District, additional funding be allocated to the Tourism Section within the Operational Services department in order to ensure that it is fully resourced.

*note: this has now increased to £402m in the latest economic impact assessment

Following on from the consultation, there have been no further comments received which relate to the strategy, but operational comments have been reflected in the delivery plan. These include:

- (a) Investigating a rural cycling network with partners;
- (b) The top 10 places to photograph in Tendring.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

There has been significant investment by both the public and private sector in tourism over recent years. Amongst others, there has been multi million pound investments into Clacton Pier, Clacton Pavilion and the Pier Hotel, Harwich. In addition to this, in 2015 the Council completed a £36 million coastal defence project stretching from Clacton to Holland on Sea in partnership with the Environment Agency. Not only has this protected the coastline, it has led to the creation of 23 new sandy beaches which provide a major opportunity for tourism development.

Cabinet adopted the 'Back to Business' agenda at their meeting on 13 November 2021, which set out how the Council would work across its range of services and portfolios to support the local economy, Tending businesses and residents in recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. The tourism projects set out in that plan are reflected in the work programme for 2021/22.

Clacton celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2021, which provides a strong hook for promotion during these challenging times. External funding to the value of £250,000 was secured from National Lottery Heritage, to develop a wayfinding trail, organise a mass participation event and develop a range of schemes/events to encourage visitors and residents to explore the heritage of our seafronts.

2020 marked the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower's voyage to the New World. Harwich played a central role in this iconic story, with the ship and its Captain, Christopher Jones hailing from Harwich. Despite the national and international restrictions, Tending continues working with ten national partners together with others in the USA and Holland to maximise the benefit. Although the Coronavirus pandemic has clearly impacted on the 'in year' potential of opening up to new tourism markets from the US and Holland, the long term possibilities are still very much alive. It is widely hoped that the anticipated 1.7 million additional visitors anticipated to the UK during 2020 will arrive when travelling restrictions are lifted. There is also potential to widen the tangible heritage offer in Tending, through working with the private sector on historical links to The Witch-finder trails and other narratives around heritage.

It is also important to recognise the role of quality visitor accommodation plays in a healthy tourism economy and to use this strategy to guide planning decisions. There needs to be a concerted effort to increase the quantity of quality bed space available in the District and protecting what already exists.

The Council has increasingly worked closely with partners over recent years, in recognition that a holistic approach is the key to success. This has included working with the private sector in Clacton to develop the 'Love Clacton' promotional campaign and with the Harwich and Dovercourt Tourism Group, where key successes include the development of a new best in practice promotional website and a new brand for Harwich which has been adopted across the town.

The Council has been working with representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors over the last 3 years to develop the tourism industry in Harwich. This is Chaired by the Managing Director of the Milsom Hotel Group and includes representatives from the Harwich Haven Authority, Harwich Society, Harwich Town Council, Harwich Festival of the Arts, Harwich Mayflower Trust, representatives of the retail sector, Harwich Connexions, Hotels/Restaurants and others. The Council has played a key role in this group and has contributed towards delivering new branding for Harwich, a new website and promotional campaign. This model can be used as the benchmark to roll out similar groups across the District to improve partnership working and guide decision making.

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION
None.

APPENDICES
Appendix A: Tourism Strategy for Tending 2021 – 2026
Appendix B: Tourism Work Programme, 2021 - 2022