

CABINET

16 JULY 2021

REFERENCE REPORT FROM THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A.1 SCRUTINY OF THE TOURISM STRATEGY FOR TENDRING

(Report prepared by Keith Durran)

BACKGROUND

At its meeting held on 24 May 2021 (Minute 6 refers) the Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee (“the Committee”) was advised that, at its meeting on 21 May 2021 Cabinet had approved that the Tourism Strategy now be presented to the Committee. This had followed public consultation on the proposed Strategy in 2020. That five year Tourism Strategy replaced the previous version for Tendring, which had expired in 2016.

Key statistics and points presented to the Committee on the Strategy were:

- Tourism was estimated to be worth more than £402 million to Tendring, and was responsible for over 8,980 jobs, equivalent to 17.9% of the District’s employment. To put matters into perspective, tourism had increased in value to the local economy by £115 million since the previous strategy was written in 2010;
- The coronavirus pandemic had impacted significantly on the local tourism industry and that strategy was tailored to extend ‘back to business’ support towards the recovery of the sector;
- The strategy set 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
- That strategy recognised that Tendring had wide attraction, that its towns and villages all had their own unique features, tourism offer and charm. It was important that the Council worked with partners to develop those unique selling points and promoted 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 was in the diversity of its destinations and that should be embraced and marketed accordingly;
- There had 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. That had improved the quality of the District as a visitor destination and demonstrated local confidence and commitment to raising standards;
- The Council had invested in major projects such as the £36m Coastal Defence scheme for Clacton and Holland, creating tangible tourism assets in Harwich for Mayflower 400, had developed 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 had invested resources into both organising and facilitating an expanding quality events programme in recent years. Built on the success of the nationally recognised Clacton Airshow and Harwich Illuminate, event organisers had 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 recognised that tourism was a fast moving, agile economy and the Council was one partner in ensuring long term success. As such, that strategy had greater emphasis on the Council's role of facilitation than its predecessor;
- The strategy was accompanied by a work programme for 2021/22, which set out actions the Council would take to deliver its strategic aims. It was recognised that the work programme was a live document and would adapt to a changing environment.
- During the discussion, one issue that was referenced was that the oldest known painting of the flag of the USA was hung on a wall in Harwich.

RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

After a detailed discussion the Committee had **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that it:

- consider the opportunities for working in partnership with local businesses prioritising such services as hotels/bed and breakfast operators to encourage visitors participating/attending or visiting events in the District to stay locally and use the services of those local businesses (potentially with discounts offered by those businesses).
- harness opportunities to those attracted to specific places/events locally to be supported to revisit by sharing other places/events locally including those using the book of the Holland Ferry, creating a dedicated visit Tendring website where the separate charms of the District can be brought together, using QR codes to encourage visits to such a website and to local heritage sites.
- take additional measures to improve the cleanliness of the District including messaging around "Respecting the district by using the area responsibly" through education encouragement and enforcement to ensure visitors are encouraged back rather than being putt-off by unsightly rubbish and over full bins.
- consider once again the previous recommendation of the Committee (minute 87 of 21 September 2020 refers) for consistent and common, highly visible branding of events and facilities provided/supported by the Council to ensure that those attending these events/facilities are made aware of the Council's role in producing/supporting the same.
- examine measures to offset the carbon footprint of the Clacton Air Show, which uses over 100,000 litres of Jet Fuel and generates 275 tonnes of CO₂, including the options perused by the Bournemouth Air Festival whereby trees were planted for each tonne of carbon used at the Air Show.
- note the intention of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Tourism to consider promoting details of bridleways that traverse the District.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENT(S) AND RECOMMENDATION(S) TO CABINET

“I would like to thank the Committee for its views and where possible, suggestions will be built into the work programme for the delivery of the strategy. Further to this, I would suggest the Committee set up task and finish groups to look in detail at how some of the suggestions could be delivered in practice. In particular, the carbon offsetting of the Clacton Airshow and how further improvements can be made to improve cleanliness. I look forward to seeing the results of the in-depth scrutiny by the Committee in these areas and welcome further thorough scrutiny that results in an improved strategy.”

Recommendation(s) to Cabinet

That the Resources & Services Overview and Scrutiny Committees be thanked for the views submitted and that the comments of the Portfolio Holder in response thereto be endorsed.