

Bolsover District Council

Growth Scrutiny Committee

15th July 2020

Bolsover Tourism Strategy (Draft)

Report of the Assistant Director of Development

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To provide an update on the emerging Tourism Strategy.

1 Report Details

Background

- 1.1 One of the Scrutiny Topic Suggestions from 2018/19 was 'Review of Activity to promote tourism within the District' and Members reviewing this topic felt there was scope for Scrutiny to have an impact and that it was potentially a good topic for mini-review. Members felt that more publicity was required for Bolsover Castle, Hardwick Hall and Creswell Crags. It was noted that this was a clear area for improved employment opportunities.
- 1.2 In August 2019 an officer was recruited to the post of Tourism and Town Centres Officer to help to act as a conduit for tourism and visitor economy information; to work with visitor economy businesses; and to deliver relevant strategies associated with town centres and tourism.

Draft Tourism Strategy (2020)

- 1.3 The Draft Tourism Strategy is attached and a summary of its main points are as follows.
- 1.4 The district's main attractions are Hardwick Hall, Bolsover Castle and Creswell Crags. The visitor accommodation sector is dominated by four hotels (Van Dyk, Ibis, Holiday Inn and Premier Inn) that offer 80% of the bed space in the district, however there is no clear relationship between the main attractions and the four hotels.

- 1.5 The district has low numbers of caravan and camp sites, and holiday lets and consequently the proportion of stays in self-catering accommodation in Bolsover district is 1.49% compared to 17% across Derbyshire.
- 1.6 89.2% of visits are from day visitors. This could be because the district is so central and so accessible, and within 1 hour's drive of 3.1 million people, and it could also be because the opportunity for the area as a short break destination is not yet realised.
- 1.7 Each staying visitor on average generates £160.10 into the local economy. The amount generated by staying visitors is 4.3 X higher than the amount generated by day visitors.
- 1.8 The higher than average percentage of stays with friends and relatives within the district shows the value that residents of the district can bring to tourism in the district and how they can be ambassadors for the district by encouraging more visits.
- 1.9 National trends indicate a growing demand for: short breaks, health and well-being breaks, and intergenerational breaks, and camping and caravanning.
- 1.10 The greater demand for short breaks and the additional value that they bring to the economy means the Council's Strategy should be to encourage more overnight stays and more visitor expenditure.
- 1.11 In order to help achieve this, the Council needs to work alongside its partners to; improve the overall visitor economy offer; improve the accommodation offer; maximise our marketing potential; improve visitor economy business engagement and to continue to improve the amount and quality of our intelligence and evidence in respect of the visitor economy.
- 1.12 Specific actions include:-
 - working to promote the district, making the most of its excellent accessibility, as a central part of a wider area to enhance its attractiveness as a short break destination;
 - working more closely with our neighbouring Local Authorities to promote tourism and to look to improve services on the Robin Hood Line;
 - Visit Sleep Cycle Repeat projects:- looking at the feasibility of a Pleasley visitor hub and camping pods at Pleasley Pit Country Park; and an audit of cycle trails in the district;
 - producing a visitor economy brochure and walking/cycling publications, producing an attractions / visitor economy brochure;
 - making the best use of a PR and social media and marketing plan;
 - improving the District's representation on tourism websites;

- establishing a visitor economy business network and encouraging staff and partners to add a link to the district's tourism webpage on external emails.

1.13 It is intended that the Strategy will be a living document and updated as and when new information is found.

Covid 19

1.14 The Draft Tourism Strategy was written prior to the Covid 19 lockdown. From March through to early July much of the visitor economy in the district was closed, and income streams supporting jobs and livelihoods abruptly halted.

1.15 There were small signs of economic life – some accommodation housed key workers and met emergency housing needs; some café's, pubs and restaurants offered a take away service; certain businesses were able to open earlier subject to safe social distancing measures.

1.16 Throughout this time the Economic Development team were extremely busy offering support to visitor economy businesses. This started in late March when it became essential to 'reach out' and gather as much contact information for the visitor economy businesses as possible so that the Bolsover Ebulletin could inform them quickly with clear messages about support measures that were becoming available. In late March, 60 additional visitor economy businesses were added to the mailing list.

1.17 Grant funding first became available from the Derbyshire County Council hardship fund, and was soon followed by the Government's Small Business Grant and Retail and Hospitality Grant, offering £10,000 and £25,000, and we understand many of the district's visitor economy businesses that met the criteria, received grant funding support.

1.18 Further active engagement with visitor economy Businesses took place, and feedback from businesses helped to formulate the £500 Covid Recovery Grant Scheme. Other businesses closely related to hospitality and leisure received discretionary grants to help ensure that supply chains would also be able to survive.

1.19 The mailing list continued to be used regularly; as requests for information so that the situation on the ground could be fed back to regional and national levels; to provide information about other grant schemes; and to pass on helpful webinars organised by Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire on a variety of topics relevant to the visitor economy.

1.20 For the foreseeable future the visitor Economy attractions will be operating at a reduced capacity by having to implement safe social distancing measures. The older generation in particular will be reluctant to visit places and eat out. There will be less international visitors.

1.21 Therefore the Strategy's Strategic Aim – to 'increase' visitors; the number and duration of overnight stays and visitor expenditure may be difficult to achieve this year but we continue to take action to promote and encourage recovery of the visitor economy.

- 1.22 Most recently, we have encouraged local businesses to take up the offer of free listings on Visit Chesterfield's website. We are continuing to pursue a number of funding opportunities to improve the cycle network and there is a number of actions we can keep working on within the emerging strategy that will help build a better future for our visitor economy.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 This report has outlined the key points and Strategic Aim of the Tourism Strategy, and has also provided a review of the visitor economy in the district since the Covid 19 lockdown.
- 2.2 It is recommended that this report and the attached draft Tourism Strategy should be considered for review and feedback from the Committee prior to consideration by Executive.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 Targeted consultation took place during March 2020 where members of the Culture and Tourism partnership group, neighbouring authorities and visitor economy businesses on the Council's mailing list were invited to comment. 32 comments /issues were received and considered and the strategy has been amended accordingly.
- 3.2 The strategy itself does not raise any equality impact issues.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 An alternative option was to not produce a Tourism Strategy but this option would not help to review activity to promote tourism in the district.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 None

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

- 5.2.1 None

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 5.3.1 Some of the actions in the Action Plan will fall to the Tourism and Town Centres Officer to action, and can be resourced.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Committee Members review the draft Strategy in accordance with their role as outlined at Part 2, Article 6.2(v) and Part 3.6 (14) of the Scrutiny functions within the Constitution.

- 6.2 That Committee Members provide feedback as part of the consultation process for the draft Strategy prior to submission to Executive.

7 Decision Information

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| <p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: BDC: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £250,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please indicate which threshold applies</p> | No |
| <p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p> | No |
| <p>Has the relevant Portfolio Holder been informed</p> | Yes |
| <p>District Wards Affected</p> | All |
| <p>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</p> | All |

8 Document Information

| Appendix No | Title |
|---|--|
| 1 | Draft Bolsover District Tourism Strategy |
| <p>Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)</p> | |
| <p>Report Author</p> | |
| <p>Contact Number</p> | |
| Jonathan Hendy | 2326 |