

Selby District Council

REPORT

Reference: E/17/51

Item 6 - Public



To: The Executive
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Status: Non key decision
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Executive Member: Cllr Richard Musgrave, Lead Executive Member for Housing, Leisure, Health and Culture
Lead Officer: Dave Caulfield, Director of Economic Regeneration and Place

Title: Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plan

Recommendations:

The Executive approve the strategy and action plan including an initial outline budget for delivery.

Reasons for recommendation

The Executive is asked to agree the recommendation as a key element in delivering Strategic Priority 2 of the Economic Development Framework: *'Making Selby District a great place to live and work'*.

1. Introduction and background

1.1 In September 2017, Make it York were commissioned to support SDC to produce a succinct visitor economy strategy with a detailed action plan.

The strategy and action plan are supporting documentation to the Economic Development (ED) Framework and timescales for delivery will accord with those of the ED Plan (2017-2022 and beyond). The Economic Development Framework identifies the visitor economy and hospitality sectors as priority growth areas for the district to support Selby District in its vision as a great place to live and work.

We know through the ED Plan development and further investigation through this strategy that we have an area rich in heritage and visitor opportunity; particularly for local residents who are attracted to the area due to the quality of employment, housing and services. Current projections on housing growth only further emphasise the district need to match this with a vibrant, quality package to its offer as a living, cultural destination. With a higher than average disposable income rate within the district, there is currently a significant loss of that expenditure outside of the district. In the main, this appears to be related to underselling our 'hidden gems' as well as needing to take a more proactive approach to strengthening the offer around them, such as the quality and accessibility of the local food and drink offer. Promoting our offer is a high priority to help visitors, both local and further afield, know the quality of our place.

We also need to consider investment in our visitor assets. Whilst we have significant attractions such as Selby Abbey, an array of nature offers and heritage offers, some of these require further development to truly realise their potential. In discussion with regional and national organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England and the Arts Council England, it is clear that Selby District has had limited engagement and is considered a priority area.

The district has not taken advantage of opportunities to build relationships, secure investment or access development funding in a coordinated way and this is shown through the area being significantly underinvested. For example, since 2013, the district has received approximately £150,000 in arts funding¹, compared to total awards for the region of £32.7m. Similarly, heritage funding records over the period of 1994-2017² highlight the district received just under £3m in support; the lowest amount of award in the Yorkshire and Humber area and only 0.56% of the entire £500m investment.

However, the district now has significant opportunity to change the approach and has emerging, closer working relationships with such partners. This is proving beneficial in terms of understanding how we can unlock potential future investment in the district as part of our place shaping agenda, as well as accepting offers of support and expertise on how to enhance the local offer. Being able to maintain positive relations will require a level of resource to achieve on this priority.

Local groups and organisations such as the Town and Parish Councils, emerging events committees, heritage groups and local businesses have also engaged in the consultation phase and are clearly identifying a growing desire to enhance the visitor economy, with the work so far proving popular and encouraging.

1.2 Impact and Monitoring

Over recent years, national experts in tourism and visitor economy have identified the sector as one of the largest growing industries for the UK in recent times³. The sector is predicted to grow at an annual rate of 3.8%

1 Source: Grants for the arts funding data Arts Council England 2013-date

2 Source: DCMS data

3 'The Visitor Economy: a potential powerhouse of local growth' Local Government Association 2013; 'England: a Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010-2020' VisitEngland 2011,

through to 2025 - significantly faster than the overall UK economy (with a predicted annual rate of 3% per annum) and much faster than sectors such as manufacturing, construction and retail. Of this, Yorkshire and Humber contribute to 9% of this economy.

Selby District has a unique position when considering how to deliver a vibrant visitor economy. Situated between three of the large neighbouring cities for the region is an advantageous position. These iconic cities can boast increasing annual economic benefit in York (£608m.), Leeds (£1.15b.) and Hull (£220m.) that offer potential to capitalise on attracting day visitors to the district, as well as develop local businesses to support a wider tourism and visitor infrastructure.

The financial impact of the visitor economy for the district is currently harder to quantify due to a dearth in information from existing local and national measures. Visit Britain figures currently suggest a visitor spend of between £20-60 million per annum from 1.5m visitors to the District. Part of the initial phase of the strategy is to develop a suite of local indicators which will support national data sets and improve local accuracy.

In summary, sharpening such data would demonstrate that the district would be set to significantly benefit from engagement with the major, local cities and in local improvement of the offer. Through delivering the outlined strategy and action plan it is anticipated that for each £1 investment over the first 3 years of the plan, this should return in the range of £4-12 visitor spend to the area, increasing in accuracy per year of delivering the plan.

1.3 The Strategy

The visitor economy strategy itself (Appendix A) is intended to be brief in nature, identifying some of the main reflections from engagement with a variety of stakeholders. It identifies a realistic approach to where we are in realising our ambitions. It also provides a high level action plan of activity which will dovetail with the Economic Development Action Plan.

Key elements in the early stages of the plan are to:

- Establish resources around tourism development and arts, heritage and culture that focus on strengthening current assets of local, regional and national importance. This will be through activity such as engaging local groups and businesses in development projects, supporting funding bids and initiatives, and developing a range of communication and promotional methods.
- Develop a partnership approach to celebrating Selby Abbey's 950th anniversary in 2019 as a focal point for the town's development; and to include any potential to capitalise on the international attraction of the Tour de Yorkshire and UCI World Cycling Championship in the same year.
- Promote our assets through neighbouring destination management organisations as an enhancement to major city offers.

4 Make it York Annual Review 2015/16

5 Leeds 2015 STEAM economic impact study

6 VisitBritain.org Local Authorities combined analysis three yearly average 2013-15

- Establish local visitor economy business connections and the formation of a Tourism Advisory Board to encourage local trading arrangements and influence on shaping local experience offers (including food, drink and night time economy), events and activities.
- Establish a relationship with international tourism bodies, building destination packages, particularly with American and Chinese links.

Longer term developments will be subject to further business case and will involve engaging with local community and business groups to establish events and activities; enhance town experiences and consider the development of local cultural centres such as improved cinema offers or opportunities for museums and tours.

2. Legal/Financial Controls and other Policy matters

Legal Issues

- 2.1 The plan assumes a level of grant award and commissioning will be required to support some of the projects. Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 applies a general power of competence to local authorities in England. Section 1 (1) of the Act provides that “a local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do”. This includes the power to make grants where to do so would be in the interests of the Council, the District and the inhabitants.

Grant agreements will need to be signed which provide appropriate levels of control and reporting back so that the impact can be monitored.

Financial Issues

- 2.2 The visitor economy strategy and action plan form the basis of a Programme For Growth (P4G) project to deliver the actions across a 4 year period. The plan at Appendix B provides a high level overview of the main milestones of delivery. An initial indicative 3 year budget outline of £460k is required to deliver the main elements of the plan.

The council will need to consider further investment in the plan as objectives develop, and in line with the next phase of overall P4G priorities. This is likely to be linked to:

- Create funds which support delivery of community and business initiatives focused on sustainable outcomes (i.e. shop high street improvement, Business Improvement District, events organisation development)
- To provide match fund for initiatives in partnership with regional and national funding bodies or local external partners
- To explore the feasibility of major investment and development projects

3. Impact Assessment

- 3.1 An equality, diversity and community impact screening has been undertaken and does not identify any significant, negative impact from this project. It identifies that there are positive impacts for business communities and local community groups.

The programme of work has engaged local business, councillors and community groups to shape the way in which we grow our visitor economy, and make the best of our assets.

A series of stakeholder engagement events have been held with the business sector, other key stakeholders and with local councillors; an online survey has been delivered and data and information on local, regional and national activity has been analysed.

There is a clear appetite to support the development of the visitor economy and vibrant events in the district. The feedback from all sectors is strongly reflected throughout the documents.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The strategy and action plan have been completed to focus development on the visitor economy as one of the priority growth areas for the District, and the Economic Development Plan. They have been shaped through engagement with local business and key community leaders.

5. Background Documents

Visitor Economy Detailed work plan (on file)
Summary of Stakeholder Workshops (on file)
Summary of questionnaires (on file)
Summary of one to one interviews (on file)
Summary of data and monitoring analysis (on file)

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