

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET 21 APRIL 2016
DESTINATION TELFORD PROGRAMME UPDATE

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: BUSINESS, DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Destination Telford Programme was established in mid 2015, in response to the transformation of Telford Town Centre with the opening of Southwater, the expansion and improvements taking place in the Town Park and shopping centre and the need to support growth in Telford's Borough Towns. The Programme will effectively utilise all of the borough's cultural, environmental and physical assets to position Telford & Wrekin as a top visitor destination.
- 1.2 The Programme is a key part of the Council's Inward Investment & Business Support activity and will contribute to and complement the Council's Enterprise Telford strategy. The visitor economy sector is one of Telford's priority growth sectors, currently generating in the region of £400m in the local economy annually and providing demand for as much as a 13% of all employment. There is considerable potential to increase Telford's penetration of the visitor market and the Programme will ensure that all communities across the Borough can contribute to and benefit from the resulting economic growth and job creation.
- 1.3 The Programme is harnessing the power of new digital technologies, creating a pioneering new business networking model to support the visitor economy sector, and is leading on collaborations with the private sector that will maximise the impact of limited resources, generating business growth and effectively marketing the Council's assets to support the Council's commercial agenda.
- 1.4 This report highlights the successes of the Programme to date, including collaborations with the private sector and the new Telford Festival programme. The report also summarises the position in relation to the Destination Telford budget and the short and long term opportunities to generate income to sustain and grow programme impact.
- 1.5 The delivery of the Destination Programme will be monitored and supported through the newly established Enterprise Telford Board.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the progress and success of the Destination Telford programme to date
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes and approves the Telford Festival programme content and delivery proposals
- 2.3 That Cabinet notes the monitoring and steering arrangements for the Destination Telford programme and Telford Festival through the Enterprise Telford Board
- 2.4 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Assistant Director Business, Development & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Neighbourhoods & Customer Services, to approve the administration and distribution of destination funds and approve public/private ventures to support the programme's objectives and create a legacy fund for future Programme activity.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	<i>If yes, please list relevant Co-Operative Council objective(s)</i>
	The proposals in this report will contribute directly towards the following priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and create jobs as a Business Supporting, Business Winning Council • Support and encourage the health and wellbeing of our residents • Encourage Children, Young People and families to participate • Improvement and maximising opportunities around recent regeneration • Supporting up skilling and retention of local people through education and skills 	
	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	The recommendations given in this report take account for activities associated to the Destination Programme until 2018/2019. Key milestones are referenced in the report.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>The Destination Programme team are funded from within the Inward Investment & Business Support Service budget and provide the support to drive the Destination Telford programme forward. The Council's medium term budget strategy includes £250k funding to support the delivery of Destination Telford programme over 3 years 2015-2018.</p> <p>The 2016/2018 Telford Festival programme will be supported by a successful Arts Council England grant bid for £50k (including £50k match funding). In addition £200k Innovation fund is available to fund community events and activities, along with budgets held within Arts & Recreation and Inward Investment & Business Support Service areas. The team is also seeking additional funding to support destination marketing and promotion and a bid for £60k EU funding has been sought which is being reviewed by DCLG.</p> <p>Four of the programmed events will be facilitated by working with partners and external providers. (AEM 22/03/16).</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes/No	As this report is for noting only there are no legal implications arising from it.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	The investment will have wide economic impact and increase local and out of area participation. It will further trigger increased spend by local residents and visitors attracted to the Discover Telford

		website and functionality which will highlight opportunities.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	The Discover Telford initiative will impact on wards where there are tourism assets and borough town high streets prioritising Ironbridge, Wellington, Newport, Madeley, Oakengates and Telford Town Centre, although the programme will have benefits across the whole Borough.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

Background

- 4.1 No consideration of the Borough's economic growth potential should overlook the significance of the areas heritage, leisure and cultural assets, with the World Heritage Site, green spaces such as the Town Park and Wrekin Hill, new Southwater development, expanding shopping centre and attractive borough towns, creating a strong and varied offer for the local, day, business and tourist visitor.
- 4.2 The Destination Programme aims to ensure the deployment of Telford and Wrekin's assets to maximum effect, ensuring that these are cross sold through complementary marketing and packaging to generate growth in the visitor economy sector, particularly from local and regional visitor leisure and business markets. The council owns a number of these key assets and there is the potential through the programme to increase revenue generation.
- 4.3 The programme recognises the importance of business related tourism to the Borough, a market worth in the region of £150m annually to the local economy generated by the 5,000 events that take place here annually. The programme is working with large venues, attractions and accommodation providers such as the Telford International Centre, Town Centre hotels and other partners to promote our business tourism offer and to maximise the conversion of business visitors to leisure visitors.
- 4.4 The programme team works in collaboration with a number of Council service areas to add value to activity and to improve the Borough's physical assets. This includes supporting the Council's arts and culture and leisure teams to package Council led events and exploit the venue potential of Council assets, maximising impact and income and raising the quality of life for all of our residents by creating access to cultural programmes and new wayfinding and tourist information facilities (working with Highways)

Challenges

- 4.5 In order to generate growth that will benefit all of our communities, it is vital to support our borough towns to maximise their potential. In common with high streets across the country, our borough towns need to attract the local and day visitor if they are to flourish and this requires innovation and imagination. Even our World Heritage Site, itself sitting within a very distinct community and high street, needs an innovative approach to capture the visitor and ensure they appreciate our whole visitor offer, spreading economic benefit.

- 4.6 The Council's business winning and business supporting approach means a commitment to creating the conditions and support for business to flourish to become more competitive, increase productivity and create more employment. The visitor economy sector is a significant contributor to the local economy, providing nearly 10,000 low to medium skilled jobs, essential to balance in the local economy and it is vital that it has access to appropriate and tailored business support.
- 4.7 Research has demonstrated the failure of many national tourism partnerships and programmes relates to the lack of effective private and public collaborations critical to sustain activity as public funding into tourism marketing is reduced. In Telford a 'partnership' model had been in existence for many years, however its narrow focus meant that it was failing to meet the business support needs of the sector and therefore not engaging the private sector in collaborative activity to generate growth and investment.

Opportunities

- 4.8 In 2014 there were just over 5 million trips to Telford, generating expenditure of nearly £422m for our local economy. The sector supports more than 9,900 jobs or 13% of all employment in the area. Of these, the majority were day trips although there are signs of growth in the key overnight market with 871,000 overnight stay trips.
- 4.9 Visit Britain has identified significant potential for growth of 3.8% annually in the tourism sector through to 2025 (resulting in a sector worth £257bn nationally), significantly faster than the overall growth in the UK economy. This is being recognised by the emerging Midlands Engine and reflected in the Marches Local Enterprise Strategic Economic Plan.
- 4.10 The Destination Telford Programme has the potential to exploit opportunities and synergies with Telford's new business Growth Hub, the Pride in Your High Street campaign and through the delivery of the Council's new festivals and events programme (Telford Festival) and the Telford Loyalty Card. The programme team are also working closely with the Telford Business Board and sector champions and major event/conference and tourism attractions, maximising opportunities for collaboration.

The Visitor Economy Forum

- 4.11 In January 2016 the Council launched the new Visitor Economy Forum. The Forum has a unique, business focused approach, dedicated to providing the sector with support that will address needs identified by businesses, but also encourages collaborative activity to market the destination and drive economic growth.
- 4.12 In just 3 months the Forum has doubled previous Telford Tourism Partnership numbers and is open to all businesses engaged in the tourism and hospitality sector and those who contribute to the visitor economy, including retailers and suppliers. It is anticipated that membership could reach more than 400 members within 12 months, with an opportunity for Forum membership to be extended to sector businesses across Shropshire.
- 4.13 The Forum has no fixed annual membership fee but is underpinned by a programme of business support activity with a range of free and paid for opportunities due to be released in the next couple of months. The Forum encourages an ethos that supports partnership working and collaboration projects that are demand driven, generate income and that support sector growth and job creation.

- 4.14 Forum members will have access to a range of sector appropriate business support that will be delivered through Telford's new Growth Hub, generating business growth and supporting the creation of new jobs.
- 4.15 Through the Forum the team will be engaging with existing groups and networks with a particular focus on addressing high street challenges, linking with the Pride in Your High Street and other local initiatives. Engagement has already started with Ironbridge groups including the Trade Consortium and World Heritage Site Steering Group and Wellington Town Council. The Forum will also be seeking engagement with Newport, Oakengates and Madeley.
- 4.16 The Forum model is already attracting attention from other Destinations across the Midlands, raising Telford's profile and creating opportunities for wider collaborations and participation in national and international marketing activity through the Midlands Engine.

Visitor Economy Forum collaborations

- 4.17 The team is already driving forward collaboration through the Forum, reaping the benefit of jointly funded marketing and promotion activity and sharing expertise between partners. Details of two major collaborations are set out in Appendix 1 attached. The Destination Programme has created a UK first with the 'Virtual Visit' which is harnessing the latest augmented reality technology to promote the destination. The Programme has also collaborated with the private sector to promote Telford to an international audience at leading trade show Confex – leading to growth in the business tourism sector. These collaborations have not only promoted the Destination to generate sector growth, but have also contributed significantly to the Council's commercial agenda, promoting the Council's assets and with a potential to generate significant revenue receipts for the Council.
- 4.18 In partnership with Forum members, the DT Programme team is identifying funding opportunities and has already submitted a bid through the current EU funding programme for finance to support destination marketing and promotion. This will include activity in three eligible Borough towns that has the potential to increase day visitor numbers by 5%, generating growth in the local economy. The bid has been approved at outline stage and has now been invited to submit a full application.

Destination promotion and packaging

- 4.19 Market intelligence is key to help the team to support event scheduling and prove best value through increasing footfall to council owned leisure and cultural attractions but also to help to support future funding bids and provide feedback to the Forum to encourage growth of this business sector.
- 4.20 An element of the work as a result with Forum members is to create unique identities for our borough towns to become visitor destinations in their own right and to create effective marketing campaigns, packaging the full range of borough assets.
- 4.21 The programme is also drawing on the results of research to develop the Telford Town Park QEII Arena's commercial proposition and market this as a venue in its own right as well as explore other opportunities to attract externally funded events and activities. The team has already linked with the National Outdoor Events Association to develop a more commercial pricing structure for the arena.

The Telford Festival

- 4.22 A significant opportunity for destination promotion and packaging will be created by the Arts & Culture teams Telford Festival programme, a programme of festivals and events that will be delivered under the Discover Telford brand. This programme recognises the importance of arts and culture to health, wellbeing, wealth and education and will deliver events and cultural activities to bring people together, grow local pride and reinforce the image of the borough as a great place to live, work, visit and invest. It is part of a much wider programme of events across the Borough, including activity, local cultural and faith events.
- 4.23 The 2016/2018 Telford Festival programme will be enabled by a successful Arts Council England bid. The Programme will support local skills development, encourage active participation and provide volunteering opportunities, raising aspirations and improving the quality of life for local people. The full calendar of Telford Festival events and marketing material are detailed in Appendices 2 and 3.
- 4.24 The Telford Festival will be packaged to maximise footfall and to assess the economic impact of the programme aiming to create a sustainable, self financing model for events and cultural activity. This model will sustain the Telford Festival approach in future years, supporting a borough wide calendar of events which will capitalise on gaps in the regional events calendar and opportunities to pool resources with external providers and seek additional funding.
- 4.25 Through the Discover Telford marketing strategy, Telford Festival will be promoted borough wide and will ensure that smaller events and activities and our borough towns gain maximum exposure and are promoted at larger scale events. Existing community celebrations in key borough towns such as the Wellington Literary Festival and Newport Show will be supported and will also help to cross sell events and will support one of the Arts and Culture teams key objectives; to empower and inspire communities.
- 4.26 The calendar for 2016 does not include a Telford Concert (formerly T Live) event. The event was always dependent on the right artist at the right ticket price for our community and despite a number of offers we did not feel the choices were suitable. In coming years if the right artist for the right ticket price becomes available then we will reconsider a future event. The Arena is available for private hire and we are having ongoing discussions with interested parties about the venue being hired out. Notwithstanding local musicians will continue to play a part in our festivals and events programming. Not hosting the concert this year also provides an excellent opportunity to channel time and resource into the development of the other larger scale destination events as showcase examples for future funding opportunities which we will need to attract in order to become sustainable.

Harnessing the power of new creative media

- 4.27 Cost effective and professional marketing and communication platforms are essential to position Telford and Wrekin's leisure and business offer and engage/inform residents, visitors and business investors. The improvement and development of these is a direct response to consultation with Visitor Economy Forum members all of whom rely on effective marketing to promote their individual assets and win new business.
- 4.28 Following extensive research into examples of best practice and using the latest website technology, the team has invested in a new lifestyle, visitor and event buyer's website www.discovertelford.co.uk. This website will be fully

hosted internally making significant annual savings for Telford & Wrekin Council and providing free and paid for advertisement space for Forum members and advertisers. It will feature a centralised events calendar, a 'members only' section for Forum members and will reduce officer resource and duplication of activity across service areas.

- 4.29 The Council's Volunteering programme will be incorporated into the website to support volunteering in the sector and to provide local opportunities for residents. In addition the Telford Loyalty Card will be linked to the website to increase local and visitor participation and drive footfall to Council facilities and to High Streets.
- 4.30 It is anticipated that the website will attract an annual traffic of over 333,000 visitors and visitor usage/trends of the site will be measured to shape future campaigns and events and to direct the promotion of discounts and incentives.
- 4.31 The website management system will support the new wayfinding and information points in central Telford and also the Council's channel shift agenda through a new visitor information point and ticket office in Southwater One, helping to cross sell borough wide assets and drive footfall to our borough towns. This will open a new channel for Visitor Economy Forum members to access to promote their assets.
- 4.32 A high profile example of early collaboration is with Telford digital specialists Woote. As outlined in 4.17 and in Appendix 1, this has produced the UK's first Virtual Visit using augmented reality to provide a fly through of Telford's key visitor assets. Both the website and Virtual Visit will generate revenue through commercialisation and deliver a direct increase in leisure/business tourism.

Destination budget and income generation

- 4.33 The Council has committed to support the promotion of Destination Telford with a budget approval of £250,000. It is key that the investment of this funding creates sustainable impacts in terms of growth, jobs and vitality of High Streets and Borough Towns. The investment must also establish a sustainable funding model that maximises on income generation to sustain programme and promotion.
- 4.34 The Destination Telford budget position is summarised in Appendix 4. Expenditure from the Destination budget during 2015/16 has focused on delivering pre-committed community events and creating the right media communication platform.
- 4.35 Spend for 2016/17 will prioritise match required to secure future funding bids, Inward investment activity to win new business, seed funding for new commercial/income generation ventures and research and market intelligence to support the development and delivery of the destination management plan.

Measurement and monitoring

- 4.36 The Enterprise Telford Board has been established to own and direct delivery of the Enterprise Telford strategy and to monitor and manage strategic issues relating to growth and investment. As a priority business sector for Telford, the Destination Telford Programme will be overseen by the Enterprise Telford Board, who will also monitor and approve expenditure from the Destination Telford budget and also monitor the impact of Programme activity. The Board is chaired by Richard Partington and includes lead Cabinet members and

Senior Officers responsible for business and inward investment, leisure and neighbourhoods.

- 4.37 The team will track engagement and activity through communication platforms such as the new discovertelford.co.uk website which allows for online user surveys and web ID/analytics. Social media and gov delivery will also play a part in future measurement and target setting for campaigns.
- 4.38 The Destination Programme team will monitor activity and impact, in particular:
- Business secured for council owned venues in 2017/2018 through commercialising the QEII Arena for event buyers and bookers. increasing VEF membership
 - Private sector funding generated through collaboration and membership marketing opportunities. Selling advertisement space through the discovertelford.co.uk website.
- 4.39 Working cross-council and through competitor research the team will feedback and make recommendations on the council and destination wider events programme to inform future investment.

5. **IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

None

6. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

None

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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