

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 18 December 2019
Report Subject	Tourism Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The tourism sector makes a significant contribution to the economy of the County supporting an estimated 3,248 jobs. Supporting the sector is an important area of focus for the Business Development team and a full time Tourism Officer is employed specifically to assist with this.

This report sets out the main areas of work undertaken by the service in supporting the sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members note the progress made in supporting the tourism sector in Flintshire.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Explaining the tourism update
	<u>Background</u>
1.01	<p>The tourism sector makes a significant contribution to the economy of Flintshire. In 2018 it is estimated that visitors contributed £275m to the economy of the County, up 6.5% from the previous year, which is the largest increase recorded in North Wales. The sector is estimated to have supported 3,248 full time jobs.</p>
1.02	<p>The overnight accommodation base in the County is varied with a mix of types and sizes from small guesthouses through to larger hotels, spread across the quality range. The accommodation base is dominated by the caravan sector located, in particular, in the north of the County.</p> <p>The County has a wide range of features that appeal to day visitors and to those looking to explore and experience an area; a growing market segment. These include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural environment - the County is largely rural with an exceptional landscape including areas of particular appeal including the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Dee coastline and Halkyn Mountain. Particularly important destinations include Talacre and Wepre Country Park. • Town centres - a number of towns in the County have a high quality built environment and draw visitors from a wider catchment. Mold market is also a popular destination for visitors. Broughton Retail Park is a major retail and leisure destination in its own right. • Heritage and culture - as well as the major attraction of Theatr Clwyd the County also features a number of castles including Flint, Ewloe and Caergwrle as well as Gladstone's Library and Greenfield Valley.
1.03	<p>Support for the tourism sector in Flintshire is delivered by the Business Development team. The team includes a dedicated Tourism Officer with the wider team contributing as needed to support the sector. The key roles played by the team include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contributing to tourism strategy and policy development at the national, regional and local level; • promoting the County to potential visitors through regional collaborative campaigns both sides of the England/Wales border; • co-ordinating the management of key destinations in the County; • securing and managing resources for both promotion and destination management; and • supporting businesses in the visitor economy sector through advice and facilitating networking and learning. <p>The service works collaboratively with the tourism business sector and regionally with other local authorities to share scarce resources in promoting the region to visitors.</p>

	<u>Current tourism activity</u>
1.04	<p>In 2015, Visit Wales announced an approach to promoting Wales based on a series of themed years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016 Year of Adventure • 2017 Year of Legends • 2018 Year of the Sea • 2019 Year of Discovery • 2020 Year of Outdoors <p>This strategy is driven by Visit Wales' response to key challenges in promoting Wales as a destination. These thematic years are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a long-term ambition to grow a stronger and more defined brand for tourism in Wales; • an opportunity to focus investment and innovation in tourism; and • a response to the need to drive an increase in visitor volume and value to Wales each year.
1.05	<p>The Council, together with partners in Denbighshire and Wrexham, adopted the thematic years approach from the outset and successfully developed a series of digital promotions including films, photography, social media and e-marketing campaigns. The complete series of North East Wales films are available on the regional YouTube channel</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtuuRbGIGvAArd7X1AC1fLQ</p> <p>The main North East Wales 'Year of Discovery' film has been shown four times on @visitwales Facebook page and has achieved over 111,000 views.</p>
1.06	<p>The Council was part of a regional tourism engagement fund bid to Welsh Government which secured £150,000 for a winter tourism marketing campaign which was delivered between October and March 2018/19. "Get Wrapped Up in North Wales" was promoting North Wales as the "number one winter destination" focussing on Christmas opportunities, events, food and drink and wet weather activities.</p> <p>The campaign engaged over 81,000 users through social media and resulted in over 11,000 new social media followers for the region. Four press visits were undertaken as well as a three day trip with a commissioned travel writer.</p>
1.07	<p>The Council is a partner in a current regional tourism marketing campaign "The North Wales Way – Discover Your Epic" for which funding of £150,000 from Welsh Government was secured. This project is being delivered over the period 2019/20 and will involve delivery of tailored promotion campaigns using Welsh Government's Wales Way brand.</p>
1.08	<p>The Council undertakes traditional promotional approaches to raise awareness of the area includes a quarterly distribution service of local leaflets to high footfall sites across North West England including Towns & Heritage Trails, Great Outdoors and Walking and Leisure Tour. The Council provides a free distribution service for local tourism and hospitality</p>

	<p>businesses which takes place four times each year prior to peak visitor periods. Businesses are invited to select from a range of local promotional print which currently includes town guides and countryside / coast leaflets. An average of fifty businesses take part in this scheme each quarter.</p>
1.09	<p>The Council, as part of a regional partnership, continues to support the food and drink sector which is developing quickly with considerable capacity to grow further. This includes: support for events; supporting the development of local food groups; promotion activity; and encouraging the purchase of local food by hospitality businesses.</p>
1.10	<p>The Council has secured £54,000 funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a project titled ‘Off Flint – celebrating our town, castle and coast’. This project is part of the wider programme of the Flint Foreshore Regeneration Scheme. The project will involve people of all ages and walks of life in recording, conserving and celebrating the diverse heritage of this historic town and enhance the 'Sense of Place'. It will sustain and build on the momentum generated by earlier projects and pave the way for longer term projects that are being developed, including the proposed multi-use centre by Flint Castle. Activities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-generational oral history documenting how Flint has changed in living memory with schoolchildren recording older residents at Llys Raddington supported living facility and local churches • Creating a community archive at Flint library including a digital kiosk • Developing Flint Coast volunteer group and running a regular programme • Rebuilding coastal revetment walls with volunteers including Army veterans, giving training in walling • Involving secondary pupils in volunteering, both practical and digital, through Welsh Baccalaureate, Duke of Edinburgh and their own community committees • Developing displays about the town's heritage with local schools for the Jade Jones Pavilion • Looking at immigration into Flint over time with secondary pupils and producing a series of comic strip style stories • Producing panels and a sculpted bench for the coast • Events including a pop up Story Shop to share stories more widely <p>The project will run until 2021.</p>
1.11	<p>In October 2018 the Council secured funding of £25,000 from Cadwyn Clwyd to develop the Flintshire Tourism Ambassador Scheme. The Tourism Ambassador Scheme in Flintshire will benefit from a new, focussed approach to increase the number of Ambassador businesses, improve the overall visitor experience and widen the scheme to include all business types that engage with visitors. The scheme will provide people working in the local tourism industry (and beyond) with a digital platform to learn and familiarise themselves about Flintshire’s tourism offer to create a working knowledge about the area’s natural and cultural resources. The project will run until December 2020.</p>

	<u>Destination Management</u>
1.12	Destinations that are well managed will be more likely to generate sustainable growth in their visitor economy, and are more likely to maximize the benefits of that growth in long term, additional income and jobs. The best managed destinations are also likely to excel in attracting new investment, in keeping value-added jobs, in bringing in new talent and in stimulating innovation.” Visit England
1.13	The Council has established a Destination Management Partnership comprising the key partners responsible for managing the County for visitors and local people. The aim of the Partnership is to enable tourism businesses to better fulfil their potential and to improve the visitor experience.
1.14	An action plan has been developed for Destination Management which sets out a co-ordinated approach, involving all the key partners, to improving and managing the County for visitors and local people. The plan (attached) is structured around the Visit Wales priorities for the sector and aims to increase the average length of stay by visitors; to increase visitor spend per head and to better spread visitors across the County.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	No new resource implications arising from this report.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	No risks identified.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	The service works in close collaboration with tourism businesses. In addition, the Destination Management Partnership takes a multi-agency approach to setting Flintshire’s strategic approach and to project development.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Flintshire Destination Management action plan

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Niall Waller Enterprise and Regeneration Manager Telephone: 01352 702137 E-mail: niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS These are provided corporately on the Infonet (link) and maintained by the Executive Office
	<p>Cadwyn Clwyd – the rural development agency covering North East Wales.</p> <p>Destination Management – a co-ordinated approach to managing different aspects of the visitor experience in a place.</p> <p>The National Lottery Heritage Fund – one of the distributors of funds raised through the National Lottery. The Fund focusses on sustaining and transforming heritage.</p> <p>Tourism Ambassador Scheme – a network of tourism champions trained to promote the County.</p> <p>Visit Wales – Welsh Government’s tourism department.</p> <p>Wales Way – a Welsh Government tourism promotional campaign focussed along the strategic transport routes in Wales including the A55.</p>