

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

PLACES ADVISORY PANEL

Date of meeting: 12 November 2008
Report of: John Knight - Prosperity Block Lead
Title: Visitor Economy Task Group

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To recommend to the Panel, the setting up of a Visitor Economy Task Group for Cheshire East.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 To set up a Visitor Economy Task Group and agree its terms of reference and membership.

3.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

- 3.1 Officer time to support the Task Group pre-Vesting Day.

4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 4.1 The financial implications will depend on the model for both strategic and delivery elements of the Visitor Economy service.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 A partnership approach to service delivery already exists within the constituent authorities. Any new model would need to fulfil statutory and advisory roles.

6.0 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 Detailed risk assessments will need to be undertaken as alternative models are evaluated.

7.0 Background and Options

- 7.1 Tourism is a significant sector of the local economy of Cheshire East, contributing around £600 million directly in 2007. Around two-thirds of this revenue is generated from day visitors. Cheshire East, therefore, already has a strong sense of place which attracts visitors and which is created by many factors such as its natural environment, built heritage, cultural activities, strong local brands (such as Tatton Park and other

gardens), and accessibility links to the adjoining conurbations of Merseyside, Manchester and the Potteries.

- 7.2 Visitor economy services are delivered in a number of ways at present, including Visit Chester and Cheshire, jointly funded staff with some authorities, a Tourism Officer within the South East Chamber of Enterprise, full and part-time officers and a contribution of voluntary time and effort from membership organisations.
- 7.3 A number of issues have now been identified which require a member input at this stage. These include:-
- (a) How should the importance of the visitor economy be reflected in Cheshire East's organisation and resource?
 - (b) How can the visitor economy be supported at the highest executive and political levels within the Authority?
 - (c) How can balanced and effective alternative partnership models be achieved?
 - (d) Does Cheshire East require a Visitor Economy Strategy to drive forward the key areas of the Authority (such as Planning, Transport, Cultural Services, Economic Development) and co-ordinate delivery with partners?

8.0 Proposed Terms of Reference

- 8.1 To develop a visitor economy model for both the strategic and delivery interface that could be regarded as an example of good practice in partnership working.
- 8.2 To consider and recommend on continuity of service issues towards the integration of the four authorities into one Cheshire East.
- 8.3 To oversee and develop a co-ordinated approach to visitor economy issues and opportunities.
- 8.4 To consider the need for a Visitor Economy Strategy to co-ordinate efforts within the Authority and with partners.

9.0 Membership

- 9.1 This should include representation from across the visiting authorities to ensure continuity of service issues are reflected in the work programme.

10.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 10.1 To align member expectations with emerging issues and solutions for a new Visitor Economy Service.
- 10.2 To develop proposals for a service delivery model for Visitor Economy for the Authority.

For further information:

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