

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 12 April 2016

Report of: Andrew Round
Interim Executive Director Economic Growth & Prosperity

Subject/Title: Visitor Economy Strategy 2016 - 2020

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sam Gardner

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. Cheshire East's visitor economy is worth over £807m a year. It is an important economic sector that contributes to jobs, growth and prosperity, both in its own right and in its contribution to Cheshire East's 'Quality of Place'. The ambition for 2016-20 is focussed around continuing to maximise growth of the visitor economy, whilst ensuring greater prosperity across the widest number of communities that will lead to greater wellbeing for both residents and visitors.
- 1.2. Tourism can be a force for good both in economic terms but also as an essential contributor to the excellent quality of life and place Cheshire East offers. This is a key factor not only in decisions to visit but also in decisions to settle and to invest. This report summarises the key elements of the strategy to take this sector forward, helping it to maintain its growth and deliver a value of over £1bn each year.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Cabinet are asked to approve and adopt the Visitor Economy Strategy 2016-20 for Cheshire East as the Council's framework to deliver services and agree policy relating to the Visitor economy.

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. The Council could proceed without a strategic framework for the continuing development of the visitor economy sector, but the Council would not have a framework to realise the opportunity to influence the economic benefits of the visitor economy through its actions.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. The visitor economy strategy for Cheshire East was first adopted in February 2011 to cover a five year period. This has now been updated and is presented as the Council's strategy for an important sector of the Cheshire East economy for the period 2016-20.

5. Background/Chronology

- 5.1. The Visitor Economy Strategy is intended to support an overall vision to maximise its contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life of Cheshire East. The strategy sets out an approach to achieving an increase in value from £807m to £1.08bn, with employment in the sector has been growing at a rate of 7% per year on average, giving a projected increase from 10,851 to 14,648.
- 5.2. The strategy recognises that partnership working is at the core of delivery, including close working with business clusters, Marketing Cheshire, (the sub-regional tourism board), and attention to cross-boundary opportunities and cooperation. A Visitor Economy Forum is suggested as a mechanism to engage with sector representatives.
- 5.3. As a Local authority, Cheshire East has a key role in developing the visitor economy's local growth potential through playing a strong leadership role and catalyst for growth; creating the conditions for it to thrive, setting the planning context, investing in infrastructure, improving skills and incentivising inward investment. Cheshire East can also ensure there is a rich cultural offer to attract visitors, pulling in visitors through the area's events, arts and heritage and helping to support both vibrant towns and the rural setting. The Council also has an important role, along with the Destination Management Organisation, in helping coordinate the activities of stakeholders across the destination and working with partners to achieve growth.



- 5.4. The strategy articulates strategic themes that help to guide the identification of priorities in seeking to maximise the contribution of the visitor economy. This links to other Cheshire East economic agendas including skills & training, regeneration, inward investment, strategic events, business tourism, rural economy, quality of place, brand and profile.
- 5.5. The priorities, between them, encompass the most promising and forward-looking opportunities for growth in Cheshire East. The 'Communities of interest' these priorities create will guide related action plans partnerships and project development over the period.



- 5.6. The strategy document sets out a cross-cutting framework within which the Council intends to operate up to 2020/21, whether in its own activity, in partnership or in the context of regional/sub-regional priorities. The updated strategy is attached as Appendix 1.

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

- 6.1. All

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Policy Implications

7.1.1. The strategy supports the Council's six outcomes. The visitor economy is an important economic sector that contributes to jobs, growth and prosperity, both in its own right and in its contribution to Cheshire East's 'Quality of Place'. The strategy directly supports the Council's objective for Cheshire East to have a strong and resilient economy. It also supports through economic activity, people to develop skills, Cheshire East to be a green and sustainable place and communities to have civic pride.

7.2. Legal Implications

7.2.1. The development of a visitor economy strategy is not a statutory function.

7.3. Financial Implications

7.3.1. All costs associated with the development of the visitor economy strategy will be contained within existing budgets.

7.4. Equality Implications

7.4.1. None

7.5. Rural Community Implications

7.5.1. The strategy positively addresses the rural dimension, identifying the opportunity to develop a distinctive rural offer that will generate growth in the rural economy and benefit the prosperity of Cheshire East and its Rural Communities.

7.6. Human Resources Implications

7.6.1. None

7.7. Public Health Implications

7.7.1. A healthy, competitive and high performing economy will contribute to the health and well being of the population of Cheshire East. This can help shape the scale and location of employment opportunities and encourage accessibility.

7.8. Other Implications (Please Specify)

7.8.1. None

8. Risk Management

- 8.1. The risk of not developing a visitor economy strategy is that other related strategies are prepared in a policy vacuum without the relevant economic objectives, priorities and direction and that the Council does not have a framework to realise the opportunity to influence the economic benefits of the visitor economy through its actions.

9. Access to Information/Bibliography

- 9.1. *The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:*

10. Contact Information

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