
REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING:	5 MARCH 2009	CATEGORY: DELEGATED/ RECOMMENDED OPEN
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	KEVIN MASON (EXT 5739)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	TOURISM UPDATE	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF EDS11 REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That Members:

- Note the work that has been undertaken to ensure the sustained growth of The National Forest as a major new visitor destination and brand.
- Agree terms of current Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Visit Peak District & Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership (DMP).
- Support a review of the arrangements for the delivery of tourism services in the light of changing circumstances.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To inform Members of the impact of changes to public sector delivery of tourism services; outline recent performance of the tourism sector in South Derbyshire; and agree a one-year SLA for 2008/09 with the Visit Peak District & Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership (which will form the basis of negotiating a further Service Level Agreement for 2009/10 and beyond).

3.0 Detail

3.1 Numerous changes to public sector delivery of tourism since 2006 have had a significant impact and are expected to further impact in 2009 and beyond, in particular, Government passed responsibility for tourism to the regional development agencies. East Midlands Development Agency set up a small strategic body, East Midlands Tourism (EMT), and required establishment of county-based Destination Management Partnerships (DMPs). Substantial additional funds have been made available with DMPs required to achieve ambitious targets. A key aim has been rationalising tourism brands/destinations.

3.2 The DMP known as Visit Peak District & Derbyshire is now the official tourism body; it delivers services previously provided by regional tourist boards, and has assumed responsibility for the county-wide IT system that underpins Tourist Information Centres, electronic kiosks and the destination website www.visitpeakdistrict.com. Using the Visit Peak District as its attract brand, the

DMP aims to disperse visitors across the whole county. With the exception of the National Forest & Beyond, all visitor guides have been replaced by a single DMP-produced publication backed by a substantial (£250,000) marketing campaign; take-up by South Derbyshire/ National Forest businesses has been low, reflecting preference for the National Forest brand, greater distance from the Peak District, and limited editorial references to The National Forest/South Derbyshire.

- 3.3 EMT funding of DMPs is part conditional upon their entering into Service Level Agreements with local authorities. South Derbyshire is grouped with Amber Valley and Erewash for representation on the DMP Board, Management Team and Advisory Panels. Changes to delivery of tourism in these authorities may require a review of arrangements.
- 3.4 Due to this authority's partnership with The National Forest, it is more difficult to evaluate the impact of the DMP for South Derbyshire. Projects funded by EMT and delivered by the DMP (such as trails, short breaks and walking/cycling packages) have however benefited the District.
- 3.5 Overall the current contribution of £5,000 represents good value for money. The Service Level Agreement for 2008/09 (Annexe A) sets out roles and responsibilities of this authority and the DMP. Content is largely standard but has had to be adapted to reflect our partnership with The National Forest.
- 3.6 Pre-dating the formation of DMPs, since 2003 this authority has worked with partners to market the whole of The National Forest and surrounding areas (including all of this district), as the "National Forest & Beyond". DMPs being subsequently organised on a county basis (with none having responsibility for the new destination) means their marketing fragments and understates all the destination as a whole offers. This National Forest & Beyond campaign is the only cohesive marketing of the destination, and the primary tourism marketing tool for South Derbyshire. Wherever possible campaigns have been adapted to maximise potential benefits from the work of the DMPs.
- 3.7 East Midlands Tourism recognises The National Forest as an iconic tourism brand, both in the regional tourism strategy and through significant direct investment. The single largest sum provided by EMT for any project in the region, more than £625,000 has been invested in the National Forest Visitor Infrastructure Project, and has greatly improved the visitor's sense of place within the destination. Through the recent introduction of, for example, woodland-based survival courses and craft activities within the destination, the National Forest & Beyond now has unique selling points to offer the visitor. However, because "official" regionally-funded marketing is delivered through county-based DMPs, the substantial increases in EMT funding for marketing do not directly benefit the destination.
- 3.8 Also approached by the DMPs for advertising, the majority of tourism businesses have chosen to support the National Forest & Beyond campaign, thus vindicating production of a cohesive guide for the entire destination. In 2008 of 100 businesses advertising in the four visitor guides, 89 chose to advertise in the National Forest & Beyond guide with 59 businesses only in that guide. For 2009 the level of business support increased to 91 of 95 businesses advertising in the National Forest & Beyond guide and 72 only in

that guide. In 2007 the National Forest & Beyond partners commissioned 'Conversion Research' to assess the effectiveness of the visitor guide. Concluding the partnership's activities to be effective and represent good value for money, the report indicated the value of tourism arising directly to be £620,000, giving a Return on Investment of 30:1 (or £30 to every £1 spent). This is well in excess of the East Midland Tourism 13:1 target and better than the performance of some DMPs

- 3.9 A National Forest & Beyond Group Visits Guide was produced in 2006, comprising a full colour section with a 3 year shelf life and regularly updated inserts. The British Travel Trade Fair, Group Leisure & Travel Trade Show and the Great Days Out Fair have been attended, adverts placed in travel trade publications, and a database of Coach & Bus operators purchased.
- 3.10 Tourism in South Derbyshire is undertaken within the ambit of Economic Development, the primary aim being to promote employment and investment opportunities. Located within Leisure & Community Development since 2008, potential synergies between tourism and leisure have been explored, such as the successful first National Forest Walking Festival. The District Council has substantially changed its tourism services with the opening in 2006 of the district's first Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in Swadlincote. Within 3 months it gained full accreditation and has since achieved enhanced Official Partner status within the English TIC Network. External verification shows an excellent level of service provided. In the 2008 National Mystery Shopper programme Swadlincote TIC achieved the highest score in the East Midlands and 8th overall nationally. No longer dealing with enquiries, District Council staff can now focus on business support and development, and product development proposals.
- 3.11 East Midlands Tourism commission an economic impact study of tourism across the region using the 'STEAM' model. This indicates growth of tourism in South Derbyshire 2003-2007 was much stronger than the Peak District & Derbyshire or the region. 3.684M visitors visited South Derbyshire in 2007, generating a total spend of £128.84M, supporting almost 2,100 full time equivalent jobs.
- Between 2003 and 2007, Employment (+3.6%) increased more than East Midlands (+3.4%) or Derbyshire (0.0%).
 - Spend by all visitors (+17.4%) increased more than East Midlands (+13.3%), and almost double that of Derbyshire (+9.1%).
 - Spend by staying visitors (+36.6%) increased by almost three times the regional increase (+13.8%), and almost double Derbyshire (+20.0%).
 - Increased **spend** by day visitors (+11.7%) was almost three times that of regional (+4.0%) or Derbyshire (+3.8%) figures.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The membership contribution of £5,000 to the Visit Peak District & Derbyshire DMP for 2008/09 can be met from within existing budgets.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 None.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 Support for the development of the tourism sector in South Derbyshire directly contributes to prosperity for all in terms of developing and expanding the local economy. Tourism particularly benefits business development and employment creation in rural areas, where much of the growth has been associated with The National Forest.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 South Derbyshire has benefited from involvement with, and the increasing profile of the National Forest & Beyond as a new tourism destination. Official research shows that for almost every key indicator, growth of tourism in the District is much higher than Peak District & Derbyshire or the East Midlands.
- 7.2 The Service Level Agreement for 2008/09 between the Visit Peak District & Derbyshire DMP and South Derbyshire District Council should be ratified.

8.0 Background Papers

None

