



To: Scrutiny Coordination Committee

Date: 5 November 2014

Subject: Tourism in Coventry

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 On 19 March 2014, the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a presentation considering the need for the development of a tourism strategy for Coventry, and the recommended structures and tools required to deliver such a strategy.
- 1.2 This briefing note provides the background to a further presentation and discussion for the meeting of Scrutiny Coordination Committee on 5 November 2014, which will consider Coventry's current performance in the tourism sector and the local developments in the past 12 months relating to the sector's performance, key structures and services.

2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Coordination Committee:

- (i) Review the performance of Coventry's tourism sector in the context of national and regional visitor trends.
- (ii) Review proposals and the rationale for the relocation of Coventry's Tourist Information Centre.
- (iii) Endorse the proposed establishment of a Destination Management Organisation for Coventry.
- (iv) Recommend to Cabinet Member (Business Enterprise and Economy) key considerations and priorities for the development of the Council's tourism services.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 On 19 March 2014, the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a presentation considering the need for the development of a tourism strategy for Coventry, and the recommended structures and tools required to deliver such a strategy. Scrutiny Board further reviewed proposals for tourism products that were in development through, and with the support of, the Council's Business Relationship and Tourism Team.

4 Tourism and Destination

- 4.1 Tourism currently generates £18,707m of expenditure within the UK economy in England alone. In the past seven years, expenditure within the sector in Coventry has risen from £72m to £84m, generated through over 590,000 trips per annum to the city.

4.2 Coventry is now the fastest growing West Midlands City for holidays and short breaks. Furthermore, Coventry is now in the Top 20 destinations in Great Britain for the total number of trips (at number 17) and ranks as the eighth visitor destination for business trips in Great Britain. However, the City does not feature in the Top 20 cities and towns for total expenditure generated or the Top 10 for business expenditure generated.

4.3 VisitEngland Great British Tourism Survey Q2 2014 Update Report

West Midlands average spend per night for all tourism is up 10.12% and average spend per trip for all tourism is up 3.05%.

Year-to-date (June 2014) All Tourism average spend per night for all tourism is up 5.93% Q3 2014 available shortly.

TOTAL SPEND (million)

England	2006 = £16,044	2013 = £18,707
West Midlands	2006 = £523	2013 = £541
Coventry	2006 = £72	2013 = £84

TOTAL TRIPS

England	2006 = 98,265 million	2013 = 103,500 million
West Midlands	2006 = 3,540 thousand	2013 = 3,560 thousand
Coventry	2006 = 544 thousand	2013 = 590 thousand

Most Visited Towns and Cities 2013 for Great Britain (GB) residents – Trips

Coventry is now in the Top 20 total trips at number 17 and Coventry is number 8 in the Top 10 for business trips in Great Britain since 2007.

Most Visited Towns and Cities 2013 for GB residents – Spend

Coventry is not in the Top 20 towns for total spend or Top 10 for business spend.

Top towns for 'Staying Visits' by inbound visitors 1999 – 2013

Coventry was in the Top 20 until 2005 and has not been back in the Top 20 since.

As a result of the above, Coventry has seen an increase in visitors from GB residents (staycations) and is currently the fastest growing West Midlands city, however, Coventry is not in the Top 20 for international visitors.

5 Coventry – The Past 12 Months

5.1 Coventry is the fastest growing West Midlands City for holidays and short breaks:

- (i) Phase one of both the visitor and conference websites have gone live and are fully operational.
- (ii) Phase one of the visitor app is live and fully operational.
- (iii) 20,000 visitor guides have been used at various levels to promote the destination.
- (iv) Successfully submitted several joint bids with partners for major events. Insomnia - the UK's biggest gaming festival, was one of these, which has attracted over 60,000 visitors to Coventry.
- (v) The first combined Coventry and Warwickshire presence at 'International Confex', the largest conference and events exhibition in the UK.
- (vi) MIPIM = working with 14 partners and securing £125k sponsorship.
- (vii) Supporting the newly formed hoteliers group.
- (viii) The Tourism Team is currently supporting delivery of a £100k city centre trial scheme for a new technology-driven click and collect scheme to support Coventry's Business Improvement District.

5.2 Business Tourism – successes and future work

- (i) Building on Partnership approach - secured 4 key sponsors (total £40k in) undertaking a programme of three major conference and meetings exhibitions.
- (ii) Trade Only is returning to Coventry (Ricoh) in January 2015. This show attracts over 5,000 delegates from 52 countries to the area.
- (iii) VisitEngland Relationship. Press Trips – organising a press trip for seven international business tourism journalists in December 2014.
- (iv) MIPIM 2015 – Work in progress.
- (v) Business engagement with the Wasps.

5.3 Leisure Tourism – successes and future work

Work in progress

- (i) Working with VisitEngland to promote Coventry's heritage in a national campaign Heritage in Spring 2015.
- (ii) Working with key contacts at Birmingham Airport to co-develop new Coventry and Warwickshire off-shelf short stay packages.
- (iii) Working in partnership with city centre attractions to have a Coventry presence at travel trade shows (Coach Operators and Tour Organisers).
- (iv) Working with Wasps (warm welcome, greetings programme, match promotion, supporting materials, links with sponsors).
- (v) Members of working group to co-ordinate the first Coventry & Warwickshire Tourism Awards.

Aspirational work

- (i) Develop phase two of the visitor website.
- (ii) Develop phase two of the visitor app.
- (iii) Produce new Visit Britain video material.
- (iv) Develop multi-lingual visitor guide.
- (v) Consider developing a work stream to capitalise on the Rugby World Cup 2015.
- (vi) A virtual recreation of Coventry's original city wall and gatehouses working jointly with the Freemans Guild (bid for Heritage Lottery Funding).
- (vii) Team identifying a potential route for the Passport for Leisure scheme incorporating digital technology.

6 Structures and Services

- 6.1 Coventry's tourism structures and services are currently in a stage of transition. In the past 12 months, the Council's Business Relationships and Tourism Services have been consolidated with Sports, Arts, Heritage and Events Services, but it is anticipated services will be subject to further review following current HR processes to align staff terms and conditions and review the potential service impact from current ER/VR processes.
- 6.2 The consolidated service has started to adopt greater cross-service working – helping to change the perception of the local authority offer – not offering partners an unlimited public purse, but taking a key role in developing a sense of place.
- 6.3 The Service is now selling its expertise, knowledge of the sector and maximising its contacts whilst pulling together a programme of regular activity to promote the place. Team members have introduced new ways of working by engaging with partners and stakeholders in new ways.
- 6.4 New partnerships formed around collaboration have therefore been established and are continually being built upon, supported by the City's key venues and stakeholders. But the service remains in transition at this stage:

- (i) Out of a core service team of five, two posts are currently held open pending service review.
 - (ii) Impact of ER/VR is to be confirmed.
 - (iii) Future focus towards destination.
 - (iv) The location of Coventry's Tourist Information Centre is under review.
- 6.5 Coventry Tourist Information Centre (TIC) is currently located in the base of St. Michael's Tower within the Cathedral Ruins in the city-centre.
- 6.6 Although the TIC is now located within a key heritage quarter of the City with a high level of profile with visitors to the City, St. Michael's Tower is considered to be an unsuitable location for the TIC for the following reasons:
- (i) The staff facilities do not meet appropriate modern day standards (e.g. there is no mains water supply or toilet within the building).
 - (ii) The Old Cathedral Spire is not Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant and changes to the building are restricted by its heritage listing.
 - (iii) There are restrictions on TIC opening hours.
 - (iv) There is insufficient storage space for stock.
 - (v) The ICT infrastructure is inadequate for current and future service needs.
- 6.7 Re-location has been under review for some time but has been constrained by discussions both over the cost and service model.
- 6.8 Work is currently underway to test the feasibility of moving the TIC to the Mercers Room, to promote greater alignment and synergies between tourism services and the visitor offer and experience at St. Mary's Guildhall.

7 Destination Management Organisation

- 7.1 Currently Coventry does not have a Destination Management Organisation. Creating a Destination Management Plan isn't just about marketing; it is about developing the total visitor experience (e.g. transportation, accommodation, culinary and cultural experiences, signage, information, technology, infrastructure etc.).
- 7.2 Experience shows that without collaboration, coordination and a continued focus, places do not evolve with a common purpose. To create a successful and sustainable visitor economy in an area, all the components that make a successful destination need to be managed in an integrated and long-term way, with a clear focus on the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.
- 7.3 Officers are working closely with Coventry and Warwickshire LEP to develop sub-regional working on tourism. The Executive Director of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre is leading this work and is supportive of the whole Coventry and Warwickshire tourism economy. The importance of tourism has been strengthened by its inclusion in the Strategic Economic Plan and there is a commitment to help formulate emerging Destination Management Plans with the potential for funding support. A Cultural Business Tourism group is due to be setup imminently and Coventry will be invited onto the steering group.

8 Drivers for a Destination

- 8.1 Whilst the structures and services for Tourism in Coventry are in a transitional phase, partnership work across both the business tourism and leisure tourism sectors has developed and progressed significantly in the past 12 months. Coventry has developed new thematic campaigns in partnership with Visit England, the City has an increasing partnership presence at key trade shows, and a range of new tourism and destination products have been successfully launched (including new print material, an innovative App, visitor website, conference website and BID website).

- 8.2 At a time of significant regeneration within Coventry, the opportunities to develop and enhance the visitor experience and truly promote Coventry as a 'Destination City' are significant. Current considerations over whether the City should bid to be UK City of Culture 2021 or European Capital of Culture 2023 further bring into focus key opportunities to celebrate and promote the City's diverse and vibrant cultural offer to potential business and leisure visitors.

Officer Contact Details

David Nuttall

Head of Service – Sports, Culture, Destination and Business Relationships

Tel: 024 7683 2362

Email: David.Nuttall@coventry.gov.uk

Deirdre Fitzhugh

Business Relationships and Tourism Team Manager

Tel: 024 7683 1228

Email: Deirdre.Fitzhugh@coventry.gov.uk