

REPORT FOR DECISION

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| DECISION OF: | Cabinet |
| DATE: | 10 October 2012 |
| SUBJECT: | Plan for Change - Destination Management |
| REPORT FROM: | Cllr Jane Lewis, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Tourism |
| CONTACT OFFICER: | Graham Atkinson, Executive Director of Environment and Development Services David Fowler, Head of Communities |
| TYPE OF DECISION: | NON-KEY DECISION |
| FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS: | This paper is within the public domain |
| SUMMARY: | This report outlines the council's co-ordinating and enabling role in Destination Management for the borough. It outlines proposals for new arrangements to support this area of work and asks Cabinet to approve the proposals for consultation with stakeholders. A final revised report will be brought back to a future meeting of Cabinet for approval. |
| OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION | To consult on proposals about how the council can support destination management in the future. |
| IMPLICATIONS: | This new co-ordinating and enabling role will result in a change to the current service provision. The final report to be brought back to Cabinet will include quantification of any staffing implications. Staff within relevant sections have been appraised of the progress of this review. |
| Corporate Aims/Policy Framework: | Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes |
| Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations: | This report outlines a number of proposals to develop the Council's destination management offer (Section 7.0). These will be the subject of consultation for four weeks. Final proposals will then be developed within the cost envelope of current budget less the 2013/14 savings target. |

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| Statement by Executive Director of Resources: | The proposals set out in the report relating to ICT developments are complementary to the Council's ICT Strategy. Clearly Bury Market will need to feature heavily in future destination management work and Property Services will be responding positively to this initiative. |
| Equality/Diversity implications: | Yes See attached Equality analysis |
| Considered by Monitoring Officer: | Yes |
| Wards Affected: | All wards |
| Scrutiny Interest: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been invited to submit comments on these proposals at the meeting of the committee on 9 October and these comments will be fed into the consultation process. |

TRACKING/PROCESS

DIRECTOR: EDS

| Chief Executive/Strategic Leadership Team | Executive Member/Chair | Ward Members | Partners |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|----------|
| | 25 September 2012 | | |
| Scrutiny Committee | Committee | Council | |
| 9 October 2012 | | | |

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Plan for Change, approved by Executive in June 2011, sets out the strategic direction for the council to manage many of the financial challenges ahead as well as new statutory responsibilities, such as the Localism Act and integration of the public health function within the local authority.
- 1.2 The Plan for Change provides a starting point for us to consider the efficiency and effectiveness of what we do; to look at the needs of our changing customer base; to consider the demand we face for services and ensure we manage the expectations of the customer in an environment where we have fewer resources.
- 1.3 Whilst the Plan for Change develops a strategy to address anticipated funding reductions for three years to March 2015, a number of risks remain due to external factors;

- The Plan for Change is based upon anticipated funding reductions extracted from the Comprehensive Spending Review using national control totals; the picture locally for Bury will not be confirmed until precise funding settlements are announced.
- Local Government Finance is subject to considerable reforms, notably the proposed retention of Business Rates at a local level. The consultation for these proposals is currently ongoing (till late September). It is likely the final scheme (and impact for Bury) will not be confirmed until late 2012 / early 2013.
- The general economic climate continues to be challenging, and the likelihood is that Public Sector spending restrictions will continue in 2016 and beyond. It is therefore critical that the Plan for Change identifies savings which are sustainable, and can be further developed in future years.

1.4 The Plan for Change is committed to ensuring an open and transparent process, actively seeking the views of the local community, listening to ideas, and where possible acting on these ideas. Since the Plan for Change was approved and in this time the Council has undertaken two consultation exercises.

1.5 In the Choices Consultation, results indicated that the most important priority was *supporting vulnerable people*, with a '*strong local economy*' and a '*decent place to live*' selected as choice two and three respectively. The results of the Choices Consultation helped inform the 3-year Programme of Savings, which sets out how the council intends to achieve £17.7m savings by 2015.

1.6 Within the Programme of Savings the council outlined that some service areas would be subject to further review before savings were made, and this included the work the council undertakes to support Bury's tourism economy. The review had a savings target of £89,000 for this area of work to be implemented in 2013/14 financial year

1.7 Bury Council currently spends £243,000 on this area of work. In the current challenging financial climate where the council needs to focus its work on statutory responsibilities, such as supporting vulnerable people, the current tourism service, which is a non-statutory function, needs to be re-designed. The re-modelled work area will ensure that the council continues to play a role in "destination management" and supporting Bury's tourism economy, but that the package provides maximum value for money for the tax payer; takes advantage of new and emerging technology and ensures that it is fit for the future.

1.8 The rest of this report sets out the progress of the review to date. It then proposes a new vision and options for the future, which will form the basis of a further consultation exercise with the public.

2.0 FROM TOURISM TO DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

2.1 'Visit England' Strategic Framework 2010-2011 objectives include the need to 'facilitate greater engagement between the visitor and the experience. Visit England note that: 'Well-informed visitors will stay longer in destinations, potentially move on to other English destinations and, most importantly, will want to return. The tourism industry must ensure that information provision is

modernised, integrated nationally, and keep pace with advances in technology.

2.2 **What is Destination Management?**

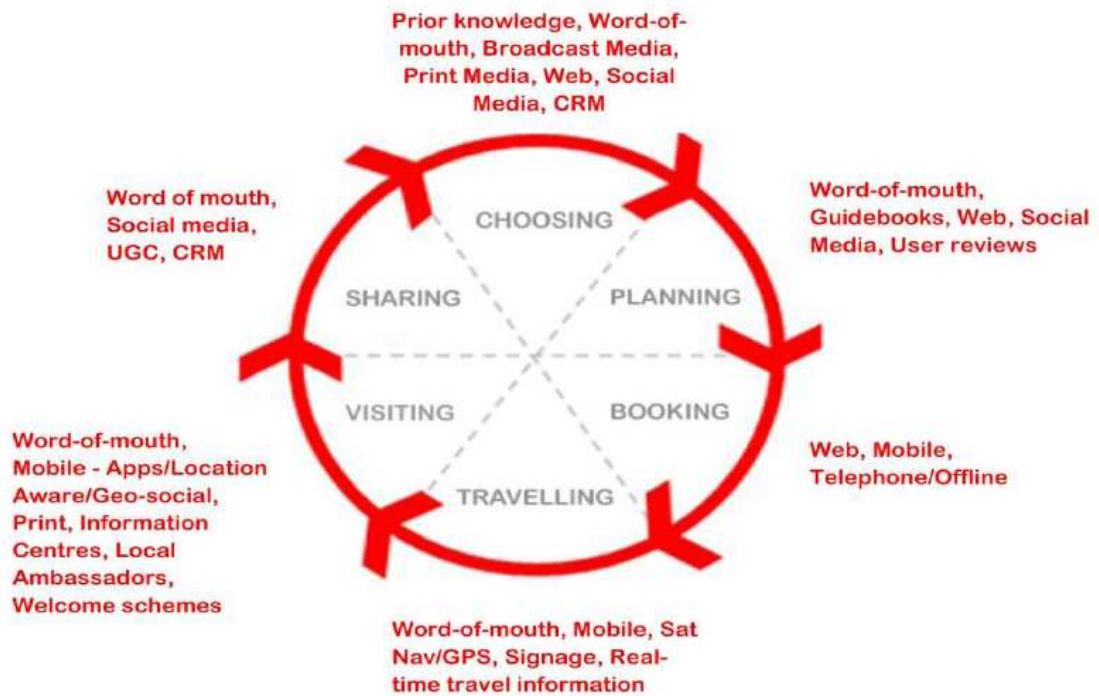
Destinations are disparate and multifaceted places that are host to numerous stakeholders with their own specific needs. Experience shows that without continued collaboration and coordination, places do not evolve with a common purpose. To create a successful and sustainable visitor economy, all the components that make a successful destination need to be managed and integrated over the long-term, focusing on the needs of both residents and visitors. These components include:

- The things that attract people to the destination; the natural environment, heritage and culture, iconic buildings, retail, sport and leisure facilities, food, events and scenery. These make a place special, distinctive and capable of engendering civic pride.
- The infrastructure that helps to reinforce and shape the sense of place and make it an easy place to visit; the quality of design, the signs, transport, parking and orientation, interpretation, public spaces and amenities.
- The services that cater for the needs of visitors, and of residents, generating economic and social activity and increasing spending.
- The elements of destination management are diverse and are often the individual responsibility of a range of public and private sector entities.

2.3 Destination management is a process that ensures that the visitor experience is of the highest quality and continues to develop and adapt to meet the needs and expectations of visitors. This will achieve a sustainable return from visitor expenditure for the local economy.

2.4 Destinations that are well managed will be more likely to generate growth in their visitor economy, and are more likely to maximise 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. Great destinations are great places to live and work as well as to visit.

2.5 Visit England identify the following strategy for marketing and encouraging visitors to a destination.



2.6 This approach will be key in developing a local approach to destination management in Bury.

3.0 GREATER MANCHESTER DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

3.1 Bury plays a key role alongside other AGMA authorities in contributing to the Greater Manchester Destination offer. Greater Manchester has a number of objectives

- To improve the visitor experience
- To enhance communication with visitors
- To develop the infrastructure
- To create iconic events, developments, initiatives and opportunities
- To ensure a better quality of life for residents
- To increase the productivity and performance of the tourism businesses
- To improve the skills level of people working in the visitor economy
- To improve community benefits:- accessibility, diversity and an inclusive night-time economy

3.2 Marketing Manchester produce an annual Destination Management Plan which looks at the direction of travel for this area of work and ensures that districts create a joint destination offer.

4.0 BURY'S OFFER AS PART OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER DESTINATION PACKAGE

4.1 Bury provides a unique contribution to the Greater Manchester with an award winning market visited by over 1,000 coaches from across the UK per annum, attractions including the East Lancashire Railway and Fusilier Museum, its varied mix of rural and urban environments as well as a varied retail and food/dining offer in both Bury town centre and township centres. A range of events throughout the year co-ordinated by local business, community groups with support from the council also attract visitors to the borough.

- 4.2 Marketing Manchester provide support to promote and market Bury's offer as part of a wider Greater Manchester destination package to visitors from other parts of the United Kingdom and overseas.

5.0 THE IMPACT OF THE TOURISM ECONOMY IN BURY

- 5.1 The impact of tourism economy in Bury, measured by the STEAM survey, was valued as £265.42 million in 2009-2010. Despite the challenging economic climate we have seen visitor numbers rise by 11% to 5.2 million in 2009-10. It is estimated that 2669 full-time equivalent jobs are directly involved in the tourism economy in Bury.
- 5.2 Therefore it is recognised that the council needs to continue to provide a package to support and enable activity in this area of the economy whilst working alongside representatives from the tourism economy as well as wider partners, communities and the private sector.

6.0 BUSINESS SUPPORT

- 6.1 As a complementary function the council currently provides business support to independent businesses in Bury's townships. Events include Ramsbottom Chocolate Festival, Radcliffe Dance-Off, Prestwich Carnival and Whitefield Halloween Festival. Many of the events contribute to Bury's destination offer and attract have been profiled by Marketing Manchester and in the media.

In the current challenging economic climate it is recognised that these events are important for local businesses and the proposals for the re-designed service continue to ensure that there is a package of support for local business groups to encourage and enable the development of innovative event packages in which all partners have an active role.

7.0 ISSUES

7.1 Bury's offer for Destination Management

It is proposed that the council's vision for destination management from April 2013 is:

"Understanding the borough's offer as an integral, yet distinct, part of the Greater Manchester tourism economy, we will fully utilise technology, our frontline capacity, our partners and communities to champion and promote the borough".

The key principles for the new destination management function for the council are:

- Focus, with partners, on **developing** and **enabling** events/ tourism activity with built-in sustainability through an agreed hand-over to local businesses or communities to self manage.
- **Web focused** – The Visit Bury website, smart phone/tablet applications, Quick Response Code (a system to provide a large amount of data in an easy to access means for mobile phones/tablet pcs) and social media offer will showcase the borough to potential tourists.
- **Out and about** – at events, at tourist venues in the borough and beyond. The principle being we go to the visitors and encourage them to come again and again!

It should be noted that the above would require a review of existing staffing resources.

To deliver on these principles a number of key projects will be developed:

7.2 Development of Visit Bury website, social media and smart phone/tablet applications

Social media, websites and e-marketing play an ever growing role in influencing visitors to select their destination to visit. Currently Bury has dedicated tourism pages on the council website. In order to develop and enhance this function to enable us to work closely with partners it is proposed to develop a stand alone Visit Bury website, with supporting social media applications will be developed to promote the Bury offer.

7.3 Providing the right information in the right place at the right time

The main principle for the new destination management function will be that we will provide visitors to the borough with the right information in the right place and at the right time. Instead of relying on a seven day a week fixed point of delivery for tourism information, staff members and Bury ambassadors will be out and about in the local community, at tourist attractions and at events to provide information and advice to visitors about current and future planned activity. A 'pop-up' service (mobile information point) will be developed which can operate from several locations across the borough alongside partners and local businesses. It is proposed that there will be a revised presence in the Fusilier Museum. This is subject to negotiation with the museum.

7.4 Continued support to incubate and enable events to support local businesses

We aim to increase the current pump priming budget for events from £11,000 to £20,000. This funding will act as a kick start or enabler for events. All events will be required to have long-term plans with the aim to hand them over within a set period of time to local communities, local business groups, tourism attractions or the private sector.

Events organised through this budget will require a business case to be developed to ensure that they do not run at a deficit and that the Council recoups costs. The Council will continue to provide technical support to ensure events are planned, safely run and assist with specialist activities such as road closures where appropriate.

7.5 Bury ambassadors

Bury is a great place and its local residents, business people and those who work in the tourism economy know that. Tourists to the borough come into contact with many people throughout their visit to the borough so building on the inspirational legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Gamesmakers we propose developing a cohort of volunteers, front-line staff and community members who can continue to promote the borough's key attributes and be proud to be Bury's ambassadors. Bury ambassadors will be drawn from:

- Communities
- Frontline staff across partnership
- Volunteers
- Bury- Bury people know best

They will:

- Have training and development
- Be highly visible and have presence across the borough and beyond, and
- Be welcoming and friendly

It is proposed that these ambassadors will help support the smooth running of events, organise talks and tours, promote the tourism offer outside of the borough and act as an advocate of Bury's best bits to friends, colleagues and relatives who have never visited the borough.

8.0 CONSULTATION

It is proposed that the arrangements for the establishment of Destination Management work are consulted upon for a period of four weeks to help refine and shape the role and future direction of this service area. During this time we will:

- Undertake a consultation event with stakeholders
- Survey tourism attractions, business group members and representatives from the local Chamber of Commerce
- Fully engage with staff in the affected area
- Engage with third sector representatives, schools and colleges to shape proposals for the Bury ambassador programme.

9.0 CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the decision to launch a consultation exercise inviting comments from stakeholders on the proposals for a new Destination Management function for the council.

Cabinet is asked to note that a final report, noting comments and suggestions as a result of the consultation exercise, will be submitted in due course for approval. At that time employees will be fully consulted in accordance with the agreed procedures in respect of any implications related to their employment conditions.

List of Background Papers:-

Plan for Change Prospectus
Plan for Change Choices Consultation Statistical Report
Plan for Change Programme of Savings
Budget Report 2012/13
Greater Manchester Visit England - Destination Management Strategy.

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