



Communities Select Committee
15th January 2014

Draft Tourism Strategy

Purpose of the report: Policy Development and Review

Surrey does not currently have a strategy for Tourism. Consultation is underway on the development of a strategy and this report and presentation to the Committee provides an early opportunity for members to discuss and help shape the document as it progresses towards consideration by Cabinet later in 2014.

Introduction:

1. The profile of Surrey has been raised by our involvement in the Olympics and high-profile cycling events such as Ride London-Surrey and the Tour of Britain. Global coverage of these events has highlighted the attractions of the county to potential visitors, and its proximity to London, the number one destination for overseas tourists.
2. We have the opportunity to support the appropriate development of Tourism and its contribution to the local economy. However we need to consider our role in this carefully, in order that any growth in Tourism does not impact negatively upon the quality of life enjoyed by the people of Surrey.

Development of the Strategy:

3. In April 2012 we commissioned research into the current state of Tourism in Surrey prior to the Olympic Games (Surrey Tourism Profiling Report, Tourism South East/Simon Matthews Associates April 2012). This gave an overview of the scope, volume and value of the Tourism sector, and also pointed to some areas for development.
4. Using these findings we have consulted with key stakeholders – Tourism organisations and businesses such as attractions, accommodation providers, conference venues etc. along with District and Borough Councils, and key partners including the National Trust, Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Key Themes:

5. These consultations have given rise to 6 key issues that have emerged as the major priorities for development:-
 - 5.1 The future of the Visit Surrey partnership.
 - 5.2 The branding of Surrey.
 - 5.3 Better co-ordination of the websites promoting the County.
 - 5.4 Policy changes and the reduction of red tape – signage, filming etc.
 - 5.5 Improving the visitor focus of our destinations.
 - 5.6 Business Tourism.
6. A short presentation at the Select Committee will explore these themes, and be used as the basis for discussion with members.
7. Background information is provided in the attached document “Tourism Strategy and Programme”.

Recommendations:

8. Select Committee are requested to consider the background document “Tourism Strategy and Programme”, along with the presentation on key themes at the meeting.
9. Select Committee are requested to discuss the themes and make recommendations to officers for further work and any issues of concern that should be taken into account when preparing a report to Cabinet.

Next steps:

Following the meeting, further work will be carried out on the draft Tourism Strategy taking into account the recommendations of Select Committee.

A further report will be made to Select Committee on the final version of the Strategy being presented to Cabinet in coming months.

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Sources/background papers:

Tourism Strategy and Programme

Surrey Tourism Profiling Report – Tourism South East/Simon Matthews Associates, April 2012.