

REPORT OF: HOUSING, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES MANAGER

TO: EXECUTIVE

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A VISITOR ECONOMY PLAN FOR PENDLE 2016/17

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval of the Council's Executive for the new Visitor Economy Plan for Pendle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council's Executive approves the new Visitor Economy Plan for Pendle.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

To align activity in Pendle to the Lancashire Visitor Economy Strategy.

BACKGROUND

1. In January 2016 Marketing Lancashire produced a Visitor Economy Strategy for Lancashire. The proposed plan shows how Pendle will align its visitor economy activity to meet the objectives of the Lancashire Visitor Economy Strategy (LVES). The Visitor Economy Plan for Pendle (VEPP) includes targeted actions aimed at increasing visitor economy activity (see Appendix 1 for the Plan).

ISSUES

2. Economic growth is part of the Council's Strategic Plan, as well as the Jobs & Growth Strategy. The Visitor Economy forms an important part of those growth plans. It generates money and jobs and helps strengthen and diversify the local economy. It also helps create better quality of life for residents as well as visitors.
3. To increase visitor economy activity with a reducing budget we have prioritised areas where we think we can maximise our outputs by concentrating on Pendle's product strengths and core messages and adopting a more digital approach. We have also aligned these areas with the regional strategy or LVES.

4. The VEPP identifies specific actions, budgets and timescales to allow progress to be monitored throughout the year.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: Economic growth is part of the Council's Strategic Plan, as well as the Jobs & Growth Strategy. Tourism or the Visitor Economy forms an important part of those growth plans.

Financial: The Tourism budget for 2016/17 is £21,500 all elements of this plan can be met from this budget.

Legal: None

Risk Management: None

Health and Safety: None

Climate Change: None

Community Safety: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Pendle Visitor Economy Plan (PVEP) 2016-2017

In January 2016 Marketing Lancashire produced a Visitor Economy Strategy for Lancashire. This Plan shows how Pendle will align its visitor economy activity to meet the objectives of the Lancashire Visitor Economy Strategy. The Plan includes a targeted action plan aimed at increasing visitor economy activity which will be monitored throughout the year.

It is important to keep in mind the reasons why Pendle Council and its partners are trying to stimulate the Visitor Economy. Regionally Lancashire has identified that the Visitor Economy is one of 7 key business sectors, generating £3.5bn a year, growing by 10% since 2009. Nationally it is the fastest growing sector for jobs. Not only does it support local jobs but it also helps create better environments and quality of life for both residents and visitors.

Lancashire Visitor Economy Strategy 2015 – 2020 (LVES):

Lancashire's Visitor Economy Strategy 2015 -2020 sets out the county's vision as a visitor destination. Based on in depth analysis of the county's product strengths, its existing visitor profile and future opportunities, the vision provides a statement of how the county wants to develop as a visitor destination by 2020:

- To be recognised as one of the top 5 English counties for a refreshing and relaxing short break and an active family holiday.
- To be known nationally as a culinary 'must visit destination' because of the authenticity and quality of its food and drink, from field to table, locally sourced from the county's stunning valleys, plains, woodlands and coasts.
- To be a preferred location for corporate events and association conferences because of the choice and value for money of its venues and the breadth and depth of the business tourism infrastructure.
- For the county's cultural and countryside offer to be main reasons that visitors choose to visit Lancashire.
- To be recognised for its stunning 137 mile coastline that effortlessly combines seaside heritage and contemporary leisure experiences.
- A destination that offers outstanding customer service on a par with the best worldwide and is an example of best practice in offering accessible holidays.

To enhance the strategic destination marketing of Lancashire and create a platform to support the wider economy it is proposed to develop "the Lancashire Story". The story will feature four themes Leisure & Pleasure, Food & Drink, Create & Make and Links & Transport.

In economic terms, by maximising the opportunities for sector growth, Lancashire's visitor economy will seek to deliver, by 2020:

- An additional 6.3m visitors so that the total number of visitors annually is 69.3m
- A change in the current ratio between new day and staying visits of 9:1 to 8:2: 1.3m additional staying visitor and 5m additional day visitors

- An additional visitor spend of £382m to reach a total of £4.08bn
- An additional 5000 jobs so that the total direct and indirect jobs supported by the visitor economy is 59,000

Delivery of the LVES will be via a Destination Management Plan which will be monitored to assess progress. In this way, the visitor economy will contribute to Lancashire's future prosperity, identified as one of seven key business sectors within the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan, for major employment growth. Alongside the importance of the visitor economy in driving jobs, the contribution of the sector in providing leisure and recreational opportunities is recognised as a vital component in delivering a high quality of life for local communities.

The Pendle product aligns with some of the key activities that the Lancashire's VES seeks to develop namely outdoor activities, heritage and cultural activities. The Pendle Visitor Economy Action Plan is designed to show the practical actions which will enhance the Pendle product as well as help to meet County objectives. The County, in the form of Marketing Lancashire, with their connections to Visit Britain/England, can also help us reach further audiences.

The stated aim of the Lancashire's VES is to increase visitor spend, with a higher proportion of that spend coming from staying visitors. Pendle supports this aim and will seek to increase visitor spend by £10 million or 10% by 2020 with the proportion of the staying spend increasing by 4%. Currently the figure for visitor spend is £101m with £24m or 24% coming from staying spend. It is important to encourage the further development of new accommodation in order to help achieve this increase in staying visitors. Though there are other non-controllable factors which will influence the way these figures move we will evidence whether we are achieving this objective by using the figures from the economic impact model known as STEAM as provided to us and other Lancashire districts by Marketing Lancashire annually.

The PVEP is not just the work of the Council; businesses involved in the Visitor Economy were consulted at a Tourism Forum in November 2015 and their views taken on board. Our regional partners, Marketing Lancashire, have also contributed to this plan, and have stated their support in achieving the tabled actions indicated below.

Promotional activity, including PR, is key to retaining our existing visitors and attracting new ones. There are certain key aspects in the way that we promote Pendle:

- Audience Alignment – we need to target the right audience, at the right time, with the right message. We can strengthen our product, but we must first target audiences which are attracted to Pendle's current product strengths. These are primarily the area's countryside and its heritage, (in particular the Pendle Witches story), but also includes its quaint villages and active towns and a strong events programme.
- Targetting – those who are attracted to our countryside and participate in outdoor activities can be segmented into different audiences, who have specific needs and wants, and need to be attracted in different ways. It is important to identify those audiences and to find the best ways to target them.
- LVES Alignment – a good number of Lancashire's identified strengths, particularly Countryside and Heritage are present in Pendle, and appropriate target audiences identified in the Lancashire VES are relevant to Pendle.

Key Planned Activities for 2016-17

- **Pendle Visitor Guide**
Although the guide provides important information, such as on accommodation, its primary function is to be the all-round, all year, promotional tool to raise awareness of Pendle as a visitor destination and ultimately to entice people to visit. The Visitor Guide is distributed to Visitor Information Centres countrywide, but with the bulk being within the North of England. Direct Mail Campaigns will be used to

generate interest in Pendle, for which the guide is the fulfilment vehicle. In line with current habits of viewing documents on line it is proposed to move to a digital version of the guide which will be available to view and download. However as there may be some requirement going forward for an in-destination publication to service local information centres it is proposed to investigate the production of a small mini guide for 2017/18.

➤ **Countryside Activities**

Aligned to the Lancashire VES our countryside and outdoor activities are seen as major strengths. We have a number of routes and events which appeal to visitors, both for cycling and walking. Since 2004 we have developed the Pendle Walking Festival into one of the largest in the country. Colne Grand Prix has had a similarly long history. In 2015 we hosted stage Two of the Tour of Britain and we intend to use the legacy of this major event to power forward our promotion of cycling in the area and build on the solid base that we've already built. The Council has an existing Cycling Strategy which is being built on in 2016 with a new Legacy Cycling Strategy. This Plan is being linked to this strategy and vice versa to achieve a co-ordinated approach. We are also promoting our offer on Cycle Lancashire.

In audience terms walkers and cyclists can be split into distinct groups, with different needs and wants and requiring different approaches. Walkers and cyclists can be big contributors to the Visitor Economy, but more so if they are staying visitors, rather than day visitors. We intend to increase walking and cycling holidays and short breaks by:

- Advertising in national locations, such as the Rambler's Walk magazine
- Connect with walking and cycling clubs outside an 1 to 1.5hr catchment area
- Package the various element of walking or cycling breaks, i.e. walking and cycling routes, possible guided assistance, accommodation etc. as part of promotional activity.
- Encouraging supply chain businesses, for example cycle hire companies

➤ **Heritage and Cultural promotion**

Arts, heritage and cultural attractions are very important in attracting visitors. Below are a number of areas where we can do so:

Pendle Witches – The story of the Pendle Witches is an effective marketing tool for Pendle. Consideration is being given to using it more, or certainly in a more systematic way. Currently we promote a number of trails which describe the witch's story including the walking trail and what we refer to as the Long Trail, which involves us with two other local authority partners: Ribble Valley and Lancaster. The Long Trail has proved popular and requires a review and reprint, re-igniting it as a promotional tool.

Leeds & Liverpool Canal Bicentenary 2016– The Canal is seen as an underused asset we will mark this important event by promoting canal events under the banner of the Pendle Canal Festival with links to activity with the Canals and Rivers Trust.

The Quaker Trail – The development of this trail will involve working with other cross-border partners on a wider multi-county trail, including parts of Pendle, Ribble Valley and parts of Yorkshire and Cumbria. The trail will only be delivered if funding can be found to support it.

Pendle Sculpture Trail – It would be beneficial to undertake some further enhancement and development of this already popular trail. Again this will be dependent on securing funding.

Culinary Trails – Food and Drink (including the importance of local provenance) is important to the visitor experience and can encourage visits and repeat visits. Where possible its important to merge these experiences into existing visitor itineraries.

➤ **Event Promotion**

Event promotion is an important part of our overall marketing strategy. We promote events throughout the borough all year round, including events in the main town centres of Barnoldswick, Colne and Nelson. There are also specific events which are most significant to the visitor economy in Pendle, and tie into the Lancashire VES themes of outdoor activities perfectly. These are:

- **Pendle Walking Festival** – we will continue to manage and publicise the festival, identifying the best routes to reaching the audience, including walking clubs. We will encourage a wider audience through promotion of the “family friendly” walks in appropriate places, and the shorter walks to the “health market”. In addition we will investigate sponsor opportunities to enable sustainability of this popular event. Figures from the 2015 event indicate that already two thirds of those coming to this event are from outside the Borough.
 - **Pendle Cycling Festival** – We will package a number of events together to strengthen the cycling product, including Cycle Sport Pendle (CSP) and other club events, SKY rides, Colne Grand Prix etc., and promote this to the relevant cycling audiences.
- **Website & Digital Media** - In recognition of the increasing use of smartphones and tablets to access data we will develop our tourism website into a responsive website in order make our digital promotion more effective. We have built a solid platform on social media through the Visit Pendle Twitter Account (428 followers), and the Pendle Walking Festival and Pendle Cycle Festival Facebook pages. Using Facebook advertising PWF reached 239,380 people and the Cycling Festival 133,216, which helped increase the number of downloads of these events respective programmes from the visit Pendle website (3,000 and 1,700 respectively). We have also started to produce an e-newsletter detailing tourism activity. We intend to further use and develop these platforms in order to assist our promotion of Pendle as a destination. Alongside this we will develop the Pendle destination pages on the Visit Lancashire website so far our input has helped increase page views by 60%. It is important for visitpendle.com and visitlancashire.com that we provide up-to-date content and quality images.
- **Partnership Working** – We will encourage the development of new Visitor Economy businesses wherever possible with due consideration to their sustainability. We will work with partners in the town centres to increase visitor footfall, as part of a Pendle-wide, co-ordinated approach. We currently work in partnership with the Forest of Bowland and in 2016 we will support the development of their Landscape Partnership to establish which activities will aid the Visitor Economy. Whilst Pendle has a reasonable visitor accommodation stock, many units are small. It is important to support these businesses whilst at the same time doing more to assist in bringing more diverse units into the area. We will continue to support and work with Marketing Lancashire to achieve the Lancashire wide aims of their Visitor Economy Strategy.
- **New Development** – We will continue to support activities which add to the Visitor Economy infrastructure. In particular there are currently proposals to introduce new hotel and leisure facilities at Northlight, Brierfield Mill, which has the potential to create new job opportunities. As part of the promotion of these new facilities we will seek a co-ordinated approach highlighting the wider area, in this instance that means incorporating the regeneration and tourism aspects of Brierfield as a whole, including the promotion of the recently developed Brierfield Trail, working with local artist's In-Situ and other partners, such as Super Slow Way.
- **Networking and Communication** – we will continue to help our Visitor Economy businesses by advising them, communicating with them, and providing a co-ordinating role in bringing them and their views together to lobby for Pendle. Externally Visitor Information provision is an important communication tool. Whilst promotion plays a vital role in attracting visitors to Pendle as a destination, the accessibility and usefulness of information provided to visitors in the destination itself is also key. Currently we have three visitor centres, in Colne (Boundary Mill), in Pendle Heritage Centre, Barrowford and one at the bus station in Nelson. Increasing strains on resources might mean that the services provided by all of these could be under threat in the future and we will need to assess how best to meet visitors need for information.

VISITOR ECONOMY PLAN

Planned Activity for 2016-17	Timescale	Budget
<p>1. Pendle Visitor Guide –</p> <p>Distribute 2015/16 Visitor Guide</p> <p>Produce a mini guide alongside the digital guide for distribution from local information centres</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Jan 2017 – Feb 2017</p>	<p>£1,500</p>
<p>2. Countryside Activities :</p> <p>Walking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of 10,000 walking festival programmes distributed to visitor information centres, walkers clubs, outdoor/countryside centres, and individuals Organisation of Pendle Walking Festival by ESP(Engineering Special Projects) Promotion of Pendle Walking Festival Promotion of walking routes in Pendle Connect with walking and cycling clubs in catchment area over 1hr travel – via email Package holiday parts to appeal to both walking and cycling audience <p>Cycling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Signage for the Tour of Britain route (ESP/Neighbourhood services manager) Publishing the TOB route in bite-size sections on visitpendle.com so they can be used easily by cyclists Publicising the TOB route to relevant audiences including splitting the TOB route into some family friendly sections and promoting them to that audience Publishing and publicising new routes from our cycle clubs (“Our Favourite Rides” series) two routes within Visitor Guide and a further two online To provide tips to those businesses who want to be more “Cycling Friendly. A tip sheet will be emailed to all tourism businesses To give more promotion to those identifying themselves as “Cycling Friendly”, for instance accommodation providers providing those facilities in visitor guide & online Ensuring all Pendle content appears on Cycle Lancashire Website 	<p>Feb. – April 2016</p> <p>Complete by end of 2016</p> <p>Some sections of TOB online by end of March 2016 The rest by end of 2016 including at least one family route.</p> <p>By end May 2016</p> <p>By May 2016</p> <p>Ongoing throughout 2016</p>	<p>£3000</p> <p>Subject to funding</p> <p>Online costs are contained within existing web costs (section 5)</p> <p>Online and e-newsletters to cycling clubs database and promote through media channels</p> <p>Officer time</p>

<p>3. Heritage & Cultural promotion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotion of Pendle Witches Walking Trail (short trail) ▪ Re-print of Witches Trail (Long trail) with partners Ribble Valley and Lancaster ▪ Promotion of Lancashire Witches Walk ▪ Promotion of Heritage Days events online ▪ Promotion of a Pendle Canal Festival ▪ The Quaker Trail – explore the potential for working with other cross-border partners on a wider multi-county trail. To do so only if finance is available ▪ Pendle Sculpture Trail – though it is already very popular, further enhancement and development of the trail would make it more so 		<p>Estimated at £600 per partner</p> <p>Canal Festival Print £500 Distribution £250</p> <p>Dependent on external funding</p>
<p>4. Event Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Event Publicity - Publicising all of Pendle's events through all our available publicity channels, including visitpendle.com, Pendle Visitors Guide (Events section), and through Social Media. ▪ Continue to manage and publicise the Pendle Walking Festival ▪ ▪ Pendle Cycling Festival Brochure 		<p>Walking festival and walking in general promotion £3,000</p> <p>Cycling Festival Print £500 Distribution £250</p>
<p>5. Website & Digital Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visit Pendle Website – to develop the site into a responsive website in order to be accessible to the increasing use of smartphones and tablets. New responsive website to be tested <p>Social Media - To increase Social Media activity and gain 50 extra likes per facebook page:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the further development of the Pendle Walking Festival Facebook page ▪ The further development of the Pendle Cycling Festival Facebook page ▪ More extensive use of the e-newsletters(increase from 1 to 3 per annum) to reach audiences through “self-service” sites (such as Mailchimp and Mad Mimi). Most importantly to collect more warm subscribers and their email addresses. Segmenting these by audience interest where possible ▪ More extensive use of the website and Twitter – scheduling in more tweets, and using ideas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Event of the month ○ Walk of the month ○ Cycle Ride of the Month ○ Business of the Month <p>These would be (re)targeted to appropriate audiences via appropriate social media channels</p>	<p>By end of March 2016</p> <p>To gain 50 extra followers in 2016</p>	<p>£3,000 phase 2 £1900pa annual costs</p> <p>Facebook advertising £500x2 for both pages</p> <p>£240pa</p>

<p>6. Partnership Working – sustainable development and promotion of existing hubs, including town centres. Identify potential sites for new, particularly larger accommodation units with the Policy Planning Manager and match sources of funding for them and pro-actively market them</p>	Ongoing	Officer Time
<p>7. New Development – Brierfield Mill/Northlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist in any activities that help bring the new hotel and leisure facility to reality, for instance find or conduct research on the need for these new visitor economy facilities ▪ Once established promote these facilities to the visitor market ▪ Promote the new Brierfield History Trail and distribute locally 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2016 Development phase</p>	<p>Officer Time</p> <p>Officer time</p>
<p>8. Networking & Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Advice - Advise business in the local Visitor Economy with internal and external business knowledge (marketing, grants available etc.), including referral to appropriate agencies (Regenerate, LEP, RDPE grant team etc. ▪ Help in promoting local businesses as part of the “Lancashire Story” (a co-ordinated approach to marketing businesses organised by Marketing Lancashire and Lancashire Enterprise Partnership) ▪ Business Communication – Make more use of e-newsletters to communicate to businesses in the Visitor Economy. Schedule four quarterly e-newsletters across the year ▪ Tourism Forums – to increase the number of these in the year to two ▪ Visitor Information provision – maintain where possible good information provision to visitors 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Feb, April, July, Sept.</p> <p>Oct 2016 & Feb 2017 Outside the busiest season</p>	<p>Officer time</p> <p>£240</p> <p>£600 for two</p>