

# **HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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## **Scrutiny Board**

### **Tourism in the Borough**

**Report by: Economy and Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Panel**

**Portfolio: Councillor Yvonne Weeks, Councillor David Guest**

**Key Decision: No**

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#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present the recommendations being made in connection with the Panel's review of tourism in the borough.

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

The Economy and Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Panel recommends to the Cabinet that:

- 2.1 There needs to be increased coordination between the Public Service Plaza and Beachlands regarding tourist information to ensure visitors to the borough can access relevant information year round;
- 2.2 Progress continues to be made on raising the profile of the boroughs attractions online;
- 2.3 An investigation in to introducing the slogan "Havant: Where the Downs Meet the Sea" online and on road signs leading into the borough be conducted to help create a unique brand; and
- 2.4 This should be an on-going piece of work with another review in two years time to assess whether the current and proposed tourism initiatives have been successful.

#### **3.0 Summary**

- 3.1 The Panel reviewed the role Havant Borough Council (HBC) plays in promoting tourism throughout the borough and investigated any possible opportunities to improve this function.

## 4.0 Current Situation

### Benefits of Tourism to the Borough

4.1 Tourism plays an important role in ensuring the borough is a prosperous, successful and attractive place for people to work and visit. The most recent tourism economic impact report from Tourism South East highlighted the various benefits tourism brings to the borough. These included:

- Total value of tourism to the borough (visitor spend) - £182 million per annum;
- Jobs supported by tourism – 4,265 (this is 11% of employment in the borough);
- Number of day visitors – 2.7 million (these visits lasted longer than 3 hours and were taken on an irregular basis, up by 4% in 2012); and
- Number of staying visitors – 312,000 (this has seen a decline since 2012)

### Key Tourist Assets

4.2 The borough has a variety of areas and activities which are key to bringing tourism into the area, these include:

- Watersports on Hayling island;
- Emsworth food offer;
- Coastal and countryside walking;
- Blue Flag beaches; and
- Traditional family holidays

Appendix A provides a list of available leaflets for visitor attractions, walks etc.

### Support Havant Borough Council Provides to Tourism

4.3 HBC offers a wide range of support to help promote tourism in the borough. Appendix B provides an example of the various events which HBC helps support and promote. There is a visitor information centre on Hayling Island which has a wide range of services available for visitors. This includes an accommodation booking service, details on places to eat, things to do, public transport information, the booking of coach excursions and holidays and many other services to help visitors. HBC has also worked hard to promote the borough online as an area to visit. This has included working with Portsmouth City Council (PCC) on their Visit Portsmouth initiative to help boost the borough's profile. There is also a good presence for the area on the Visit Hampshire website ([www.visit-hampshire.co.uk](http://www.visit-hampshire.co.uk)) and a Visit Havant website has also been implemented ([www.visithavant.co.uk](http://www.visithavant.co.uk)) which is kept up to date and regularly refreshed.

## 5.0 Future Options

### Further Joined-Up Working

- 5.1 Joined up working within the Council and with other organisations can be a cost effective and beneficial way of boosting tourism in the borough. Currently the Beachlands office on Hayling Island provides a very useful service to tourists; however the Panel does feel that there needs to be better coordination between this office and the Public Service Plaza. There is very little tourist information available at the Plaza which is a missed opportunity as it could become an information point for tourists. A leaflet rack could be made available focusing on local events and activities with Customer Services also being better utilised to help visitors. When Beachlands is closed there is a lack of resources available for visitors to access tourist information. The potential for customer services to be able to provide a similar service to Beachlands when it's closed or at least to signpost people to the relevant information needs to be investigated. It is important that there is coordination between Beachlands and the Plaza so this can be achieved. Tourists should be able to visit the Plaza and be able to find out what events are on or know what accommodation is available in the area etc.
- 5.2 The Panel recognises that working with Portsmouth City Council (PCC) is very important as Portsmouth is a major visitor attraction on England's south coast attracting 8.6 million visitors annually and generating £557 million for the local economy. With Portsmouth next door to Havant we have to investigate ways of capitalising on visitors to Portsmouth and promote the borough to them. Steps have already been taken with the purchase of a double page spread in the VisitPortsmouth visitor guide. This has a far reach with copies in the following languages: English 150,000, French 20,000, German 10,000, Spanish 8,000 and Chinese 5,000. Portsmouth has also carried out advertising campaigns to boost tourism in London and overseas. It would be financially prohibitive for HBC to embark on such advertising campaigns; however any opportunities to promote the borough in conjunction with Portsmouth's campaigns should be investigated.

### Increasing the Borough's Online Presence

- 5.3 HBC has been working hard to raise the profile of the borough's tourist attractions and events online. The introduction of the VisitHavant website has certainly been positive containing information on all of the areas within the borough and links to activities, events, attractions and public transport. The borough has a good presence on the VisitHampshire website and a Twitter feed has also been established which is useful in disseminating tourist information. To continue to build on this good work though it is important that HBC continues to progress on what has already been achieved. A VisitHavant Facebook page could be set up to reach an even wider audience, although it is recognised that growing a social media presence can take time. Portsmouth City Council (PCC) has set up a VisitPortsmouth Facebook page and this currently has 25,300 likes with an annual reach of 1,390,061 users. This is an important tool that Havant needs to utilise to increase our reach and inform more people of what the borough has to offer. The Panel feels that social media can play an important role in attracting younger people in to the borough. Our interviews revealed that on Hayling Island the majority of people using leaflets to obtain information were senior citizens. This needs to be maintained in order to continue to attract this

demographic, however more possibly needs to be done to attract the younger demographic in to the area with social media playing an important role in this.

- 5.4 Another aspect of social media which could be explored is whether it would be feasible to develop a Havant App. An App is a programme that users can access on their mobile phones or tablet computers. An example of what a Havant App could potentially do is provide information on local businesses, give directions to the nearest restaurants, highlight local attractions and so on. The Panel is not sure what the financial implications of this would be but the feasibility of it should be examined.

#### The Havant Brand

- 5.5 The Panel feels that creating a Havant brand would be useful in distinguishing the borough from other areas on the south coast and help draw in visitors. Havant is situated in an excellent location with good travel links. With a beautiful coast line and the South Downs National Park situated just north of the borough there is an opportunity for Havant to market itself as a central hub which visitors could use as a base to visit local attractions. A slogan such as “Havant – Where the Downs Meet the Sea” could provide a unique selling point for the borough and this could be featured online and possibly on signs welcoming motorists into the borough. An opportunity to develop such a brand needs investigating.

#### An On-Going Piece of Work

- 5.6 This review of tourism in the borough is just an initial examination into how we can boost the number of tourists visiting the area. This should be an on-going piece of work and the Panel recommends that this is revisited by the Panel in two years time to see if any initiatives detailed above have worked and whether visitor numbers to the borough have actually increased or decreased.

### **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1 There needs to be increased coordination between the Public Service Plaza and Beachlands regarding tourist information to ensure visitors to the borough can access relevant information year round.
- 6.2 Progress continues to be made on raising the profile of the boroughs attractions online.
- 6.3 An investigation into introducing the slogan “Havant: Where the Downs Meet the Sea” online and on road signs leading into the borough be conducted, to help create a unique brand.
- 6.4 This should be an on-going piece of work with another review in two years time to assess whether the current and proposed tourism initiatives have been successful.

### **7.0 Implications**

Resources:

7.1 There are many options mentioned for investigation e.g. notice board, road signs, websites in the report but none have any actual Financial implications at this stage.

Legal:

7.2 There are no direct legal implications for this report.

Strategy:

7.3 Ensuring there is a thriving tourist sector in the borough helps the council achieve its vision in the Corporate Strategy “..that the communities of South and East Hampshire will be increasingly prosperous, vibrant and active”.

Risks:

7.4 If the recommendations are not implemented there is a risk that an opportunity to boost the economy of the borough could be lost.

Communications:

7.5 The recommendations of the review would be communicated online and via road signs.

For the Community:

7.6 Improved new ways to attract tourism will engage the business community and result in a boost to the borough’s economy.

Integrated impact assessment

7.7 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed and concluded the following: the recommendations of this report will have a positive impact on the vitality and wellbeing of this borough.

## **8.0 Consultation**

8.1 The Panel undertook a number of interviews with individuals and organisations with an interest in tourism.

### Appendices

Appendix A – Local Tourism Leaflets Available

Appendix B – List of Events

Appendix C – Cllr Kerrin Report

Appendix D – Cllr Francis Report

Appendix E – Cllr Mrs Shimbart Report

Agreed and signed off by:

Governance and Logistics Executive Head: 20 May 2015

Economic Development: 29 April 2015

Legal Services: 19 May 2015

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