

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Executive Cabinet	16 August 2012

RESPONSE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON TOURISM AND PROMOTING CHORLEY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To respond to the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on Tourism and Promoting Chorley.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the Executive support the implementation of the recommendations made by the task and finish group, and the additional work that will be undertaken over the coming year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny task and finish group into Tourism and Promoting Chorley were considered by the Executive Cabinet on 21 June. This report outlines how the recommendations will be delivered, and the additional work which will be undertaken in the coming year to encourage tourism in the borough and promote Chorley to visitors and business.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Strong Family Support		Education and Jobs	
Being Healthy		Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Neighbourhoods	
Safe Respectful Communities		Quality Community Services and Spaces	
Vibrant Local Economy	✓	Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages	✓
A Council that is a consistently Top Performing Organisation and Delivers Excellent Value for Money			

BACKGROUND

5. The council's Overview and Scrutiny committee established a task and finish group to look into tourism and promoting Chorley during 2011/12. The findings and recommendations from that inquiry were received at the Executive Cabinet meeting on 21 June.
6. The aims of the inquiry were;
 - to identify Chorley's main assets for tourism around the borough
 - the key events in the calendar that might attract people to visit Chorley
 - to examine the opportunities, including partnership working that may exist to maximise the promotion of Chorley and encourage more visitors to its town centre and surrounding villages in the best possible way.

RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

7. The following sections respond to the recommendations made by the task and finish group, and outline how the council and its partners may be able implement them.

Town Centre/Markets

8. Inquiry recommendations:
 - a) That the Council look into the feasibility of advertising at the local train stations.
 - b) That the Markets page on the Chorley website be linked to various other pages, where shoppers are seeking information about different types of markets.
 - c) The Council looks into ensuring that Chorley comes up as a top hit in the Lancashire area as a market destination on the various search engines on the web.
9. Executive response:
 - The recommendations around the website and search optimisation will be included within the development of the new council website, which will be launched in the second quarter of 2012/13. Chorley markets already come close to the top of searches for 'Lancashire Markets' and 'Tuesday markets', but search optimisation work on the new website will include improving this.
 - The possibility of advertising the borough's attractions more at local train stations will be examined in the review to be undertaken later into the year of the promotional literature available about the borough. This will include consideration of advertising the borough at stations outside the borough to encourage day visitors.
 - In addition to the recommendations, work is being undertaken on the development of a marketing strategy for Chorley town centre. This will aim to encourage more visitors, both from within the borough and from further afield, to come to the town centre.

Astley Hall

10. Inquiry recommendations:
 - a) That the Council be asked to examine the potential to improve car parking facilities for the park to encourage larger events, this to include working in partnership with Lancashire College/Woodlands regarding the use of their car parks as an overflow facility for Astley Park, on major events. In addition, to developing a traffic management plan for major events in the park.
 - b) That the Council develop and monitor visitor demographics to Astley Hall and Park.
 - c) That a development plan be devised for the Hall, complex and park to encourage the use of the park and increase visitor numbers.
 - d) That the opening hours of Astley Hall be more flexible to be able to respond to seasonal changes in the weather.

- e) To improve the presence on the council's website with a distinct feel to promote the Hall, park and other attractions.
- f) Develop marketing materials for the Hall and complex to promote weddings, conferences and other events.
- g) To exchange our promotional leaflets with other authorities, to better advertise our key attractions in like for like venues.

11. Executive response:

- The council has developed a new traffic management plan for major events which was tested at this year's Picnic in the Park. The new plan received positive feedback from residents in Astley Village and local ward and parish councillors. The plan needs to be further developed to ensure that it works for all events and weather conditions, and this will be completed this year.
- Consideration will be given following the development of the council's main website to the development of new web pages with a different look and feel for the hall, park and complex.
- A development plan for Astley Hall, complex and park is planned and will be completed by the end of the financial year. The plan will include the following, and stakeholders will be included in the consultation:
 - Review of facilities and usage of Astley Hall & Park
 - Development of the play area, pets corner and enhancing the sensory garden
 - An increase in events
 - Longer opening hours for the Hall, and
 - Future use of the farmhouse

Promotional

12. Inquiry recommendations:

- a) Examine options for better marketing attractions in the borough on the internet, for example through the Council's website.
- b) Review existing literature that promotes the borough and ensures that local attractions and accommodation have easy access to it so they can encourage visitors to stay in the area.
- c) To consider the provision of additional signage relating specifically to tourism across the borough.
- d) To exchange our promotional leaflets with other authorities, to better advertise our key attractions in like for like venues.
- e) That Chorley Council does more to promote itself at Rivington Barn and surrounding amenities, eg, distribution of the Chorley Smile magazine.
- f) That Chorley Council consider becoming a member of the Tourist Board under the new arrangements, in line with other district Councils.

13. Executive response:

- As with the earlier recommendations, consideration will be given to further marketing the borough's attractions through the council's website when it is launched later this year. In addition, work will be undertaken to review the use and coordination of attractions through other sites such as trip advisor.
- The Executive are considering the option to provide signs on the motorway.
- A review of the promotional literature will be undertaken as part of the development of new promotional items, such as for the Astley Hall complex. This will be completed by the end of the year. The review will also include consideration of where the literature is placed to ensure the greatest reach, including what information should be placed at Rivington Barn.
- The council has been in contact with Marketing Lancashire (the replacement for the Lancashire and Blackpool tourist board) to discuss the benefits of

membership. Marketing Lancashire will be in contact in the coming weeks to discuss the benefits and costs of membership.

Partnership working

14. Inquiry recommendations:

- a) That the Council investigate the possibility of providing Council support to United Utilities following Good Friday to tidy around the Rivington Pike area.
- b) Work with partners to improve public transport links to the Rivington area to ease traffic problems.
- c) That the traders be encouraged to remain open for business during the Christmas Light Switch on event.
- d) That the schools across the Borough be contacted before the summer break to allow them to be more involved in the Christmas Lights Switch on event.
- e) That Chorley Council consider working with partners like United Utilities to encourage the use of the locality for one off events.

15. Executive response:

- Work will be undertaken to develop working relationships with the United Utilities area managers around the management of Rivington Pike, including after the Good Friday event.
- In June, the council worked with partners at United Utilities to host a small event at Rivington Pike to light a beacon to celebrate the Queen's jubilee.
- Initial plans for the Christmas lights switch on event have been developed. These have been discussed with the town centre team, and traders have been encouraged to identify ways in which they could support the event. Following feedback and discussion, the parade element of the event will be replaced this year with more attractions in the town centre, which will encourage families to visit and stay in the town centre over a longer period.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

16. The administration have also prioritised other projects and actions to support the borough's economy and quality of life by promoting tourism in the borough beyond the recommendations made in the overview and scrutiny report. For example:

- Plans are being developed to build on the success of the events held over the Jubilee weekend this year next summer to provide an event for residents and promote Chorley as a visitor destination.
- More work will be undertaken to promote the borough through social media sites such as Flickr, Twitter and Facebook.
- The new website will make the process of advertising local events more straightforward and quicker for local community groups and residents.
- A new economic development strategy is currently being developed. This will include objectives and action around promoting the borough to potential investors, to promote the borough as a good place to do business.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

17. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

18. At present, none of the responses will result in the Council requiring additional budget. Costs will be contained within current cash limits.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

19. There are no comments.

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
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