

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Overview and Scrutiny	8 April 2013

UPDATE ON PROGRESS IN RESPONSE TO TOURISM AND PROMOTING CHORLEY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To update the Overview and Scrutiny committee on progress made on implementing the actions arising from the Executive's response to the task and finish group report on tourism and promoting Chorley.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the report be noted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The report provides an update against the progress made in implementing the Executive's response to the tourism and promoting Chorley task and finish group. Progress has been made in all areas, with further events and attractions staged to encourage more visitors to the borough.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	✓
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	

BACKGROUND

- 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. The Executive approved its response on 16 August.
- 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.
7. The recommendations from the inquiry were grouped under four main headings; town centre and markets; Astley Hall and park; promotional; and, partnership working.
 8. The Executive response accepted the recommendations that had been made, and outlined the work that was planned to develop tourism and further promote Chorley.

PROGRESS MADE ON PLANNED WORK

9. The table below provides an update on work undertaken since the Executive's response to the inquiry.

	Overview and Scrutiny recommendation	Executive Response	Progress update
Town Centre and Markets			
1.	That the Council look into the feasibility of advertising at the local train stations.	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	A meeting has taken place with Network Rail and Northern Rail to investigate the use of advertising at stations. The cost is high for ongoing advertising, but will be considered as part of the development of particular campaigns.
2.	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. That the Markets page on the Chorley website be linked to various other pages, where shoppers are seeking information about different types of markets	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.	Work has continued to ensure that Chorley's markets continue to appear at the top of search results for local markets; including through the use of page titles and descriptions. In addition, Chorley markets are included on many of the pages that list details about local markets.
3.			In addition to the recommendations, a town centre masterplan is being developed over the coming months. Following that, a campaign will be developed to promote Chorley town centre.
Astley Hall			
4.	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	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	The traffic management plan has continued to be developed and used at major events in the park, including the Derian House Winter Sparkle.

	Overview and Scrutiny recommendation	Executive Response	Progress update
	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.	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.	In addition, the council has approach Lancashire College to request an arrangement that allows use to be made of their car parks during events. In addition, suitable council assets are being examined to provide an all-weather car park provision.
5.	<p>That the Council develop and monitor visitor demographics to Astley Hall and Park.</p> <p>That a development plan be devised for the Hall, complex and park to encourage the use of the park and increase visitor numbers.</p> <p>That the opening hours of Astley Hall be more flexible to be able to respond to seasonal changes in the weather.</p> <p>Develop marketing materials for the Hall and complex to promote weddings, conferences and other events.</p> <p>To exchange our promotional leaflets with other authorities, to better advertise our key attractions in like for like venues.</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 	<p>The development plan is currently being developed ready for consultation.</p> <p>From the beginning of the new season, visitors to Astley are being asked for more information – including postcodes so that visitor patterns can be monitored.</p> <p>The opening hours of the Hall have been increased for the new season by 22% to increase opening hours at holiday time.</p> <p>Work has been undertaken to develop more marketing materials for the Hall as a wedding venue, and this will continue in the next 12 months.</p> <p>In addition, the council is working with Chorley Remembers to market the new exhibition, the Chorley Remembers experience in the coach house. The exhibition will give additional reasons to visit the park and will open in April.</p>
6.	To improve the presence on the council's website with a distinct feel to promote the Hall, park and other attractions.	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	The content of the relevant web-pages were reviewed and refreshed as part of the development of the new web site. Consideration will be given to developing a different look and feel in further development of the web site.
Promotional			
7.	Examine options for better marketing attractions in the borough on the internet, for example through the Council's website	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	<p>Some of the borough's key attractions appear on TripAdvisor; including Chorley Little Theatre and Astley Hall.</p> <p>The work on developing the content of the website will</p>

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		review the use and coordination of attractions through other sites such as trip advisor.	continue as the website becomes established.
8.	<p>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.</p> <p>To exchange our promotional leaflets with other authorities, to better advertise our key attractions in like for like venues</p> <p>That Chorley Council does more to promote itself at Rivington Barn and surrounding amenities, eg, distribution of the Chorley Smile magazine.</p>	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. 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.	<p>New promotional materials have been developed for Astley Hall to market it as a wedding venue. In addition, the council is working with Chorley Remembers to develop signage and marketing for the new exhibition.</p> <p>The location of the drop-off points for the What's Happening magazine to ensure that it has the greatest reach. As a result of that, the council has received requests for additional points which have been accommodated.</p> <p>Further work will be undertaken in a campaign to be developed and delivered during 2013/14 to promote the use of council assets.</p>
9.	That Chorley Council consider becoming a member of the Tourist Board under the new arrangements, in line with other district Councils.	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.	Changes in the management of Marketing Lancashire meant that the meeting to discuss the benefits of membership has been delayed, and will take place at the beginning of April.
Partnership working			
10.	<p>That the Council investigate the possibility of providing Council support to United Utilities following Good Friday to tidy around the Rivington Pike area.</p> <p>Work with partners to improve public transport links to the Rivington area to ease traffic problems.</p> <p>That Chorley Council consider working with partners like United Utilities to encourage the use of the locality for one off events.</p>	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.	Work has been undertaken to develop working relationships with United Utilities – including the staging of a Jubilee Beacon event last June.
11.	That the schools across the Borough be contacted	Initial plans for the Christmas lights switch on event have been	The format for the Christmas light switch-on was changed

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	<p>before the summer break to allow them to be more involved in the Christmas Lights Switch on event.</p> <p>That the traders be encouraged to remain open for business during the Christmas Light Switch on event.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>slightly this year – with a change to a Saturday event. The event was well-received, with similar numbers of people attending to previous years despite poor weather.</p> <p>In addition, the switch-on event was complemented by events on every weekend in the run up to Christmas – including brass bands, carol singing, street entertainment and a pantomime. The feedback from the town centre team to the programme has been positive.</p> <p>In addition, the council arranged for a Big Wheel to be placed on the Flat Iron car park for the Christmas period. The council recouped its costs through sponsorship and ticket sales, with over 12,000 tickets sold. Surveys of people going on the ride indicated that the majority people who came to ride the wheel stayed to shop in the town centre.</p>

10. Progress has been made against most of the recommendations made by the task and finish group. Where there remains work to do, this is planned for 2013/14.
11. In addition, work is being undertaken to stage and support more events within the borough that will provide a focus for promoting Chorley to its residents and visitors. This will include a programme of events in Astley Park and the town centre during the summer months.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. 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

13. ***

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

14. ***

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Chris Sinnott	5337	57 March 2013	Tourism update