

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

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| Date | 1 SEPTEMBER 2014 |
| Title | PROGRESS IN DELIVERING OF THE FENLAND TOURISM BOARD |

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| <p>1. PURPOSE/SUMMARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny committee with a performance update on the Fenland Tourism Board Strategy and Action Plan. |
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| <p>2. KEY ISSUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the Fenland Tourism Board progress on its delivery of the action plan. |
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| <p>3. RECOMMENDATION(S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview and Scrutiny are requested to consider the progress made by the Fenland Tourism Board in delivering the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for Fenland. |
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| Wards Affected | All |
| Forward Plan Reference No. (if applicable) | N/A |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | Cllr Michelle Tanfield, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Children and Young People including Chair of the Fenland Tourism Board |
| Report Originator | Vicki Whittingstall, Economic Development Officer (Tourism and Culture) |
| Contact Officer(s) | Alan Pain – Corporate Director alanpain@fenland.gov.uk |
| Background Paper(s) | Fenland Tourism Action Plan |

4. BACKGROUND

In 2012 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee carried out a review of the positioning of Tourism Services and its role in supporting tourism within the District. Following this review The Fenland Tourism Board (FTB) was created as a partnership board by Fenland District Council to oversee the further development of a District Wide approach to encouraging and developing the tourism economy in Fenland.

The FTB meets in 6 week intervals and operates under the general principles of partnership working and collective responsibility, the board has developed the strategy and agreed actions that are being implemented via the resources and expertise of the individuals and organisations represented on the board supported by the Council.

The Boards consists of:

- Cllr Michelle Tanfield, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Children and Young People including Chair of the Fenland Tourism Board
- Cllr Sam Clark
- Cllr Derek Stebbings

7 persons that represent the industry:

- Mr Boughton (Fields End Water)
- Mr Clayton (Octavia Hill's Birthplace House)
- Mr Fryett (Tall Tree Leisure Park)
- Mrs Syred (Fox Narrowboats)
- Mrs Wright (Press/Promotion Work)
- Mrs Fowler (Common Right Barns)
- Mr Gowler (Skylark Maize Maze)

The FTB members have been invited to the Overview and Scrutiny meeting to support Cllr Michelle Tanfield in the delivery of this report.

Fenland Tourism Strategy
Action Plan
2013/14

Strategic Aim 1
Build on destination and branding

| Objective | Actions | Outcome | Delivery Partners |
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| <p>To deliver sustainable development of the tourism sector within Fenland</p> | <p>Strengthen the visitor economy, the local retail offer, mix and street scene through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fenland Economic Development Strategy 2012-2031 - Fenland Leisure Strategy 2013-2018 - Renaissance Project - Wisbech 2020 Vision - Proactive planning policy and deliver approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vibrant and attractive market towns economy that supports the growth in tourism, employment, housing and the community - Improving visibility and the image of the market towns | <p>FTB</p> <p>Town Councils</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Local Community Groups</p> <p>Stakeholders</p> <p>Cambridgeshire County Council</p> <p>Fenland District Council</p> <p>Highways Agency</p> |
| | <p>Strategically market Fenland based upon the district's competitive advantages across the tourism field;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Visitor and Accommodation Guide (December) - Regular positive press releases both general tourism and themed tourism in local, regional and national press - Regular Social Networking updates - Targeted Press Days - Targeted Marketing Campaigns for the trade and retail (bird watching, waterways, wildlife, harbour, heritage etc) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive coverage of Fenland as a location of choice for tourism, leading to days trips turning into overnight stays and more. - Raising the profile of Fenland as a visitor destination - Encourage visitors into the Fenland, benefiting the local businesses and economy - Target marketing will help achieve growth | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out a review the signage in Fenland, including brown destination signs, internal tourism finger post signs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve economic vitality and business confidence - Increase visitor spend/overnight stays - Raise profile of Fenland - Showing visitors Fenland's Offer - Encourage people from the main roads into Fenland i.e. off the A47 into the market towns | |

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| | Support further development of the tourism sector businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accommodation Providers - Attractions - Local Producers - Restaurants, pubs and cafes | - Better informed intelligence to enable support and guidance to be delivered in a more coordinated way to facilitate tourism and economic growth | |
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Strategic Aim 2

Marketing and promotion of Events

| Objective | Actions | Outcome | Delivery Partners |
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| Agree a strategic direction for marketing and promotion of Fenland and its events to encourage tourism and economic development | Support in terms of promotional activities the development of a vision for markets, community events and parks in Fenland through marketing the activities | Improved promotion and development of existing markets and events to encourage more visitors to the events and Fenland. | Local Businesses and Community Groups Local Farmers and Food Producers FTB Stakeholders Local Community/Events Groups Fenland District Council Town Councils |
| | Support the Leisure Strategy in supporting the marketing of an active leisure programme that incorporates Fenlands Park, Open Spaces, and Four Seasons events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved promotion of leisure facilities and activities. - Increasing Fenlands offer i.e. Leisure centres, leisure activities parks and open spaces etc - Encourage further use of local community spaces - Increased activities around special celebrations/holidays to encourage more visitors to the events/Fenland. For Example: Heritage Open Days, Bank Holidays | |

Fenland Tourism Strategy Action Plan 2013/14



Cambridgeshire County Council

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| | <p>Continue development and maintain the tourism website as a resource centre for visitors and add promotion for the tourism providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further development the events section on the website including an online calendar - Develop a news section, linking with press releases - Develop the rural village section on the website - Gain a better understanding of the website hits being received, develop work around improving this. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve promotion of the whole District, - Regular fresh information and fresh images - Increased involvement from all market towns and rural villages - Increased involvement from tourism providers in Fenland, including accommodation, attractions, eateries, theatres and events | |
| | <p>Strategically market Fenland across the tourism field by attending tourism exhibitions/fairs outside of Fenland and link this back to targeted marketing work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To attract more visitors to Fenland - To increase visitor spend and length of stay - To encourage more group booking - To raise the profile and image of the area | |
| | <p>Deliver a marketing campaign to attract additional visitors and inform existing visitor of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All visitor attractions - Restaurants, pubs and café's - Accommodation - Transport and accessibility - Events, Festivals and Fairs - Theatres - Heritage and Culture (e.g. walks) - Harbour Developments and Waterways Gateways (both inland and coastal) - Locally grown produce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To attract more visitors to Fenland - To increase visitor spend and length of stay - To increase local pride and participation in Fenland - To raise the profile and image of the area | |

Fenland Tourism Strategy Action Plan 2013/14



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| | <p>Collate and distribute monthly events What's on Guide in Fenland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop online presence - Develop online calendar - Promotion through Face book pages, Cambridgeshire.net, shape your place etc | <p>Promotion of monthly events in Fenland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly guide - Websites | |
| | <p>Promote, enable and support the development of new events, e.g. local food festival, fishing competitions, ploughing events, pumpkin festivals, photography, star gazing etc.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To increase visitor numbers and spend - To raise the profile of Fenland - To increase local pride in Fenland - To increase participation by local residents - To help address cohesion issues | |

| Strategic Aim 3 | | | |
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| Develop effective partnership working | | | |
| Objective | Actions | Outcome | Delivery Partners |
| Maximise partnership working in Fenland to encourage tourism growth | Strengthen dialogue with all stakeholders in Fenland through a programme of business engagement - Bi monthly FTB updates (Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct, Dec) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better informed intelligence to enable support and guidance to be delivered in a more coordinated way - Update information on FTB delivery - Regular engagement between FTB and Stakeholders | FDC Stakeholders Visit Britain Farm Stay |
| | Strengthen links with partner agencies (for example: Farm Stay, Visit Britain, TIC Networks, Social Media, Wash Harbours, Sport England, Angling Trusts) to develop links and working relationships that raise the Fenlands profile outside Fenland. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cross service and partnership delivery to ensure increased tourism opportunity and visitor spending as a result of this collaborative work. | |
| | Annual review of the Fenland Tourism Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the effectiveness of the board - Review board members involvement | |

September 2014: Overview and Scrutiny Fenland Tourism Board Update

Strategic Aim 1 Build on destination and branding

To deliver sustainable development of the tourism sector within Fenland.

- Annual Visitor and Accommodation Guide distribution figures for 2014 from the distribution agency show that **9727 copies have been distributed** up to end of July 2014 compared to 7320 at the same time in 2013.
- The FTB and FDC are supporting Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to deliver action 27 of the Wisbech 2020 Vision, which also forms part of the FTB action plan. 'To improve brown signs in and around the town, including key routes wherever possible, to highlight existing attractions and advertise forthcoming events' CCC and the Highways agency engineer have completed a basic assessment of Wisbech, To assist in the assessment CCC used the Countywide tourism sign policy, to ensure that all venues were assessed on an equal basis; there is a need for signs, that the brown tourism signs remain reputable and they can be trusted by the public.

The next phase of this project is to review the assessment in August and move the project forward.

- A Fenland caravan park 'Fields End Water Caravan Park and Fishery' received an award for being one of the country's best campsites, giving a big boost to efforts to attract more visitors to the district was judged the best site in the Heart of England region in this year's AA Caravan and Camping Awards. David Hancock, editor of the AA Caravan & Camping Guide, said: "Congratulations to Fields End Water Caravan Park, who have been awarded the title of AA Campsite of the Year Heart of England in recognition of exceptionally high standards, service and presentation."
- Peckover House, Wisbech (the National Trust) has won one of the prestigious 2014 Hudson's Heritage Awards which were announced in February at Goldsmiths Hall in London. Peckover House was highly commended in the Accommodation category for the Wainman House holiday let. The awards, which were established in 2011, are an independently judged annual national awards scheme open to historic houses, gardens, museums and heritage sites and celebrate the very best heritage experiences. To find out more about the award please follow the link <http://hudsons-awards.co.uk/theaward-for-best-accommodation/> To find out more about Wainman House please follow the link <http://www.nationaltrustcottages.co.uk/cottage/wainman-house-010052/>
- 'England's Hall of Fame' the search began in February when Visit England asked the public to submit their suggestions on what England has brought to the world and what makes the country such a diverse and fascinating place to visit and explore. The People's Choice went on display, alongside 18 of the best claims to fame (a bronze, silver and gold per category) in a one-off exhibition on London's Southbank. Launching on St George's Day (23rd April) and running until 30th April, Visit England's Hall of Fame exhibition at the Southbank's Observation Point will celebrate what England has brought to the world and what makes the country such a diverse and fascinating place to visit and explore. By taking part in this promotional campaign, Fenland's profile is being raised at a regional, national and international level, encouraging visitors into Fenland.

Octavia Hill Birthplace, Wisbech, Founder of the National Trust, Octavia Hill has been identified in the top 60 entries under The Great, The Good & The Notorious.

Strategic Aim 2 Marketing and promotion of Events

To agree a strategic direction for marketing and promotion of Fenland and its events to encourage tourism and economic development.

- Attended the Group Leisure Travel and Trade Show
 This year's event successfully brought together hundreds of group organisers, travel buyers and exhibitors ranging from attractions, tourists boards and accommodation providers to ticketing agencies, coach companies and tour operators. The show offered two days of ideas, deals and advice for people who organise group trips and holidays. The Cambridgeshire Fens stand spoke to and provided information to around **122** organisers ranging from Coach Companies to smaller groups like Women's Institute Groups. The organisers were looking mainly for 1-3 night trips and day trips. A number of coach companies asked for advice on places to stop off instead of driving through/around Fenland. All organisers were given a copy of the Welcome to Cambridgeshire Fens Visitor Guide and a number of suggested day trip cards, the link to Cambridge was very evident, people said that they had been to Cambridge but had not considered travelling into the Cambridgeshire Fens but following our conversations with them, sparked some interest. Following the show all contact made will receive follow up information.

- Attended the only Group Travel Show in the East of England!
 The 2014 Tourism & Leisure Show in Essex was a bumper year, with fantastic ideas for short breaks and great days out throughout the East and South of England. We attend promoting the Cambridgeshire Fens as a perfect destination to visit for a relaxing break, short break or day trip. The Tourism & Leisure Show provided us with the perfect opportunity to meet our potential visitors face to face, to promote the Cambridgeshire Fens, and assist them in preparing their events calendars for 2014 and beyond. In total we spoke with just over **150** group organisers, coach or tour operators, associations, clubs, societies, school teachers, youth organiser and the general public providing them all with a Visitor and Accommodation Guide, suggested day trips, website details and our contact details. From these enquiries a large number of people have suggested they will be in contact to arrange a visit to the Cambridgeshire Fens.

- Regular social media updates about events/news from Fenland with reference to tourism activities are being sent out via the Facebook and Twitter:
 - Facebook 123 likes
 - Twitter 105 followers

- Introduction of an online events calendar, linked to the monthly 'What's on' programme, the events are also included within the monthly Discover March Brochure with a print run 10,000 copies each month

- Work with The Middle Level Waterways Commissioners to distribute copies of the Annual visitor guide to all holiday makers entering the middle level waterways system via boat, initially 400 copies have been provided to Middle Level Waterways Commissioners.

- Discover Britain for Groups. The advert ran during Feb/March and April 2014 perfectly timed for Easter, spring, summer & autumn group enquiries. Whilst we/Fenlands stakeholders may have received enquiries through the normal channels, some responses were sent directly to Discover Britain for Groups known as 'reader reply service' which then were forwarded on to the council to follow up on, From this advert **35 enquiries were received**, and all enquiries have been contacted to start making arrangements for the group visits.

- Advert in East Life Magazine to promote the Cambridgeshire Fens a perfect destination to visit for a relaxing break, short break or day trip. The Magazine has a print run of 50,000 copies that are distributed with East Magazine, Take One media distribute to London Kings Cross and Euston Stations, London Community Centres, Car Rental Agencies, Arts Centres including Barbican Arts Centre, Hospital Trusts including Guys & St Thomas's. Travel and Ticket Agencies, Libraries, Court Buildings including Temple Law Society, Conference Centres etc. Distribution also includes 20 Rail Stations, and

all the East of England Tourist information Centres.

- Mail Merge of annual visitor and accommodation guide 2014 to coach companies, tour operators, and group travel organisers.
- The FTB supported the Rose Fair in conjunction with the Wisbech Yacht Harbour; to coincide with Rose Fair Parades the Wisbech Yacht Harbour opened its gates to visitors who wished to visit the Yacht Harbour from 10am to 4pm.
- The FTB supported the Circuit of the Fens Cycling Event, 350 information packs were produced and issued to all teams entering the event. The pack included copies of the Welcome to Cambridgeshire Fens, Visitor and Accommodation Guide and information on Fenland. A direct website link was created from the event website to visitcambridgeshirefens.org to assist all looking to come to the event for information on accommodation and things to do.
- Building on previous year's success, the FTB is working with partners to help further develop and promote events in Fenland, including National Heritage Open Days. The 2014 brochure of events will be published in Mid-August.

Strategic Aim 3 Develop effective partnership working

Maximise partnership working in Fenland to encourage tourism growth.

- The Fenland Tourism Board (FTB) as part of its ongoing work to strengthen its dialogue with all stakeholders and partner agencies sent out its Bi-monthly newsletter. The newsletter is a way to better inform intelligence and enable support and guidance to be delivered in a coordinated way; it provides a way to update on work being delivered, on any news or opportunities that arise, this edition included good news stories from providers, wanting to share their news.