

**Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director for Environment and Economy**

Report to:	<b>Economic Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>29 November 2016</b>
Subject:	<b>Tourism Review Update – Historic Lincoln Plans for 2017 (Commemoration of the Battle of Lincoln Fair)</b>

**Summary:**

This report provides Members with an update on developments within the tourism sector, especially the statistical information that shows the continuing excellent and countywide impact of the Council's investment in Lincoln Castle. It goes on to show how work is being undertaken to connect together tourism partners into a strong partnership across Lincolnshire, and finally it identifies some of the major events that are planned to maintain the impact of Lincoln Castle in 2017 and beyond.

**Actions Required:**

It is recommended that Members

1. note the substantial impact that investment in Lincoln Castle has had both within Lincoln and across the whole county, and
2. support the emerging programme of events for 2017.

**1. Background**

Following completion of Lincoln Castle Revealed and the scaling down of the County Council's tourism team, much work has been put in place regarding how tourism promotion is delivered in future. It is helpful to begin by looking at the latest figures of Lincolnshire's performance.

The 2015 STEAM volume and value figures for Lincolnshire were published in August 2016 and as we might have expected there is a very positive uplift. It is interesting to note that the 'Castle effect' has rolled out across Lincolnshire as we always intended that it should.

STEAM reports a 7.3% increase in visitors from 2014 and a 6.2% increase in GVA. The number of day visitors in 2015 was 583.42, up from 536.39 in 2014. The total value for Lincolnshire in 2015 was £1.34bn.

The 2016 season also seems to have been very positive, although we will not receive the official figures until mid-2017. Lincoln businesses have reported significant business as a result of Poppies: Wave and Economic Development conducted a sample interview survey of tourism businesses across Lincolnshire to get a feel for whether the roll out effect was continuing. Most reported stable business with three having record years, with very high occupancy rates. A Lincoln hotel reported an average occupancy rate of 90%, which had surprised them so soon after opening. Another guesthouse in mid-Lincolnshire had achieved 90% occupancy for the past 3 years. A hotel in mid-Lincolnshire, but convenient for the A1, reported excellent group business during 2016 based on the Castle and the Poppies. Heritage and Aviation were cited as important draws, with the Poppies at Lincoln Castle being mentioned particularly.

## **Tourism Review**

In 2016 we commissioned a Tourism Review which has been endorsed by both the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) and all the tourism officers. It made a number of recommendations which have already begun to be actioned:

- **Identify a destination branding hierarchy for Lincolnshire** – Agreed and GLLEP planning to put some resources behind this – ongoing.
- **Produce a comprehensive body of information about visitors to Greater Lincolnshire** - Market Intelligence is critical to successful marketing. County and Districts have all put forward their databases for analysis and we hope to have the results early December. A Hotel Study has been commissioned, updating an earlier version produced in 2009, and this should report mid-February 2017.
- **Produce a place marketing toolkit for visitor economy businesses** - Agreed and GLLEP planning to put some resources behind this – ongoing.
- **Maximise the opportunities offered by Hull 2017 and Mayflower 400** – Meetings have taken place with Hull, as they have a shortage of accommodation and are keen to work with us and this work is ongoing. The Mayflower 400 discussions have been ongoing for some time in preparation for 2020. We are in support of a North Nottinghamshire Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid and Boston are also preparing some HLF bids. We attended a useful Mayflower networking event at the US Ambassador's home in September and a week later welcomed the US Ambassador on a visit to Lincoln Castle. Emma Tatlow, formerly manager of Visit Lincoln, is now working for Visit Britain in coordinating the national Mayflower promotions.
- **Create a new Visitor Economy sector forum** – The GLLEP has taken the lead in establishing a Visitor Economy Board. This would be private sector led and the tourism officers have suggested a number of candidates. It was felt that all the tourism officers should have non-voting places on the Board. The GLLEP are currently developing the terms of reference.

The tourism officers are delighted about the level of progress on the Tourism Review in a relatively short space of time.

## **2017 Plans**

The success of 2015 was consolidated by an excellent events programme which supported the major Lincoln Castle investment. This added to the sense of vibrancy and showed how a good events programme helped to draw visitors in. With the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Battle of Lincoln Fair and Charter of the Forest next year plans are in place for the celebrations. Lord Cormack and the Historic Lincoln Trust (HLT) are well advanced in their planning of a major exhibition called Battles and Dynasties which will take place 27 May 2017 to 4 September 2017. This will include loans from major institutions and also from the collection of Her Majesty The Queen. Some of the loans have real star quality and are rarely on display and will therefore form the centre-piece of our marketing. As always the paperwork behind obtaining these loans is considerable and until agreed we cannot reveal what the loans are to be.

It is interesting to note that it is only through the £22m investment in Lincoln Castle Revealed and the previous investment in The Collection that allows us to apply, with confidence, for such prestigious loans, knowing that we have the state of the art conditions in which to display them.

There are other exciting plans for 2017. Lincoln BIG is repeating their successful Baron's Trail, this time using Knights on horseback, making the connection with William Marshall and the Battle of Lincoln Fair. The 2015 Trail was incredibly popular with children, with many families to be seen following the trail and 'ticking them off' and in the process visiting various venues across the city. The Woodland Trust (based in Lincolnshire) are planning a national celebration of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Charter of the Forest and have involved us in their discussions. They are planning a series of large, artist designed 'totem poles' across England and we are hoping that one will be placed at Lincoln Castle or some other suitable venue in Lincoln.

Lincoln Cathedral has been planning for some years a major Heritage Skills Festival on 23-24 June 2017. This will have a medieval theme and involve most of the City of London Livery Companies. We feel that bearing in mind the success of the European Festival of Stone that was held at the Cathedral in 2013, that this event will be high profile and very popular. There are a number of other events at the Castle, some of which relate to the anniversaries. Due to the packed programme, one or two of the events we had been planning have been put back to 2018. In particular it was felt that the creation of a medieval village on the main lawned area would be very appropriate to the Castle's 950<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018.

## **2. Conclusion**

The success of the 2015 events programme has led to much better pre-planning by all concerned, both logistically and in promotional terms. The more notice we have of events the more effective our marketing campaigns can be. Work on the anniversaries of 2017/18/19/20 has been ongoing since 2015 and we need to begin looking at how the £16m investment in Lincoln Cathedral Connected will impact on Lincolnshire in 2021.

Through the work undertaken this year on the Tourism Review we believe that Lincolnshire is better placed to capitalise on the investment made.

In conclusion, whilst the Council's own resources for tourism are small, by effective and targeted action their impact can be significant.

### **3. Consultation**

#### **a) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

n/a

### **4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	LCR coverage 2014-15
Appendix B	County PR - September 2016

### **5. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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