

Tourism Study Sub-Committee – 28 November 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Tourism Study Sub-Committee** held on **28 November 2005** when there were present:-

Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr C A Hungate

Cllr D G Stansby
Cllr Mrs M A Starke

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren - Chief Executive
S Rom - Economic Development Officer
J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor T G Cutmore was appointed Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Sub-Committee noted its terms of reference.

3 TOURISM STUDY

The Sub-Committee gave detailed consideration to the Tourism Company's Stage 2 report that had originally been presented to the meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 15 November 2005.

In introducing the report the Chief Executive advised that, at present, approximately £7,000 remained in the tourism budget for 2005/06.

Responding to questions, officers advised that:-

- Whilst it may be possible to dovetail with the work of neighbouring authorities in some activities, there will be areas where Rochford District will be offering a distinct and individual experience.
- The Council's amended Local Plan will allow a certain element of bed and breakfast provision in the countryside.
- The right marketing approach is key to communication on tourism for both residents within the District and those in a ten to fifteen mile radius outside. The right marketing strategy also needs to be in place in the development of tourist information.
- Should a decision be made to proceed with leaflet production identified under the destination point proposals, these would be targeted at as many outlets as possible. Destination print could be seen as a project that would underpin a number of other activities.

- Some bicycle rallies already ran through the District and there could be merit in some future work around the co-ordination/publicising of these.
- Some work on the website could perhaps be undertaken in tandem with current work in the area of business and employment. Consideration would need to be given to the availability of capacity should it be decided that website redesign should be undertaken to align it with the destination print approach.
- The introduction of brown tourism signage lies within the overall responsibility of the Highways Authority. There could be merit in the District considering whether signs can be badged with a District Council identity and the possibilities for achieving appropriate sign sponsorship.
- At the recent Budget Away-day Members identified that tourism should have a reasonably high priority for further discussion at the next Away-day. It would be useful if the Sub-Committee was able to provide the Council with a steer on projects that could be undertaken during 2006/07 should a budget of say, £20,000 to £25,000, be available.
- There is a need to build links with the business community and develop an understanding of their needs and aspirations in this area.
- It would be of value for work to be undertaken aimed at developing recommendations for areas where adjustments to current Council policies may be appropriate for the furtherance of tourism.

During discussion the Sub-Committee recognised that it would be possible to make decisions in some areas, such as the destination print project, that would facilitate early results and provide foundations to inform broader strategy development. It was noted that, whilst there could be merit in considering the possibilities for opening up the River Crouch to visitors, this should form part of future discussions on strategy. This would also be the case for suggestions such as the development of horse-riding facilities.

It was agreed that it would be appropriate to recommend that the monies available in this year's budget be applied to the introduction of a destination print project with associated website development at a total cost of £7000, therefore using the remainder of the 2005/06 budget allocation. It was also agreed that there should be early development of a mechanism for engaging the business community/ commencing networking with other bodies.

Turning to 2006/07, the Sub-Committee identified four separate areas where activity would be appropriate. It was agreed that, for the longer term, it would be of value for the Sub-Committee to undertake a detailed review exercise on whether there is tourism potential within the District in the areas of bird watching and caravanning/camping.

The Sub-Committee concurred with the observation of the Chairman that it would be helpful if the Council's tourism activities could be developed into an action plan chart capable of facilitating the identification of progress and areas where further work is required.

Recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee:-

- (1) That the sum of £7,000 currently within the 2005/06 budget for Tourism provision be applied to:-
 - A destination print project.
 - A visitors website project (allying to the destination print project).
- (2) That work commence on the development of a mechanism for engaging the business community/commencing networking with other bodies.
- (3) That, subject to the final outcome of overall budget considerations, the following projects be first priority for any tourism monies that are available during 2006/07:-
 - Walks Leaflet
 - Activities Leaflet
 - Rights of Way Leaflet
 - Heritage Trail/Churches Leaflet.
- (4) That the Sub-Committee be tasked in the first instance with undertaking a review exercise to ascertain whether there is tourism potential within the District in the areas of bird watching and caravanning/camping. (CE)

The meeting commenced at 4.00pm and closed at 5.44pm.

Chairman

Date