

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY

17 JANUARY 2008

TOURISM CHARTER FOR DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek support for the City Council becoming a signatory to the “Partners for England Place Making Charter”.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 “Partners for England” is a collaborative exercise being promoted by Visit Britain (formerly the English Tourist Board) and by the South West of England Regional Development Agency on behalf of all the regional development agencies in England.
- 2.2 A central element of this exercise is to secure widespread formal support for the Place Making Charter that aims to:
- establish how key organisations can best contribute to supporting the development of the visitor economy in a specific area
 - raise aspirations and foster positive collaboration amongst all those concerned with maximising the benefits from a thriving visitor economy
- It identifies the roles and responsibilities, in strategic development, implementation and delivery of those key organisations active within the visitor economy both regionally and at destination level.
- 2.3 The tourism industry within Exeter has matured over recent years into an important contributor to the local economy that helps drive many businesses, including hotels, B&Bs, restaurants, cafes, visitor attractions, sporting facilities, the retail sector and transport to and within the city.
- 2.4 As well as working with others, through the Economy and Tourism Unit to promote and develop tourism in the city, the City Council is very actively engaged in a number of practical ways. For example it:-
- provides much of the infrastructure of tourism, essential services such as Exeter Visitor Information and Tickets, signposting, street cleaning and waste management, public toilets and car parks, which ensure that basic visitor needs are catered for
 - supports the development of arts and sports, often in major festivals and events, which are of great appeal to visitors as well as residents
 - operates visitor attractions of its own, like the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, the Underground Passages, Quay House Visitor Centre and the Red Coat Guided Tours

- devises and promotes visitor products, from self-guided walking trails to special events
- cares for parks, open spaces and other public areas
- makes planning decisions which can have an important impact on tourism
- gives grants, advice and practical support to arts organisations and events
- is the licensing authority issuing licences to taxi drivers, pubs and public entertainment venues.

3. THE CHARTER

- 3.1 All areas (whether a city, town or village) have unique challenges that require local solutions. Recognising this, the Charter sets out a core set of principles that all relevant stakeholders can sign-up to and which can help identify where principal delivery responsibilities lie in their areas. By signing up to the Charter an organisation is agreeing to champion excellent destination management in their areas and ensure key tasks highlighted are carried out by those responsible for delivering them.

Roles

- 3.2 A number of organisations have a critical role in providing those services which under-pin a vibrant and successful visitor economy. The aim is to achieve excellent destination management through clarity of responsibilities and the encouragement of best practice and greater collaboration among:
- local authorities
 - sub regional tourism organisations
 - regional development agencies
 - regional delivery partners
 - VisitBritain
 - public bodies operating nationally within the visitor economy in England
 - the Tourism Alliance representing the private sector
- 3.3 It is intended that this clarity will be provided through signing-up to the Charter for destination management, which will be championed and supported by those responsible for the:
- management and development of ‘place’ and the visitor experience
 - provision of tourism services
 - provision and co-ordination of facilities for visitors
 - marketing, promotion and communication of tourism and tourism services
 - provision and dissemination of information
 - tourism product (accommodation, food and drink, entertainment, attractions)
 - infrastructure and transportation
 - skills, training and quality of welcome

Principles

3.4 The Charter is based on five principles that can be used with all key players, in particular the organisations listed at 3.2 above, to define priorities, roles and responsibilities.

3.5 The elements of the principles relevant to local authorities and the City Council are summarised below.

3.5.1 Integrate

Local authorities will:

- ensure a clear understanding, at the most senior levels of the key role that tourism and the visitor economy plays in supporting ‘economic and social well being’
- embed the needs of the visitor and visitor economy in all local authority plans and policy frameworks
- pursue and promote sustainable tourism development
- recognise that tourism and a thriving visitor economy is as important to the wellbeing of the local population as to the visitor
- manage the visitor economy in partnership with all stakeholders, and be clear about roles and responsibilities for marketing and product development
- ensure structures are in place to work and communicate with the local industry and private sector

3.5.2 Inform

Local authorities will:

- work with regional and national partners, to collect and share intelligence and statistics
- measure the size and performance of the visitor economy and its related services and activities
- ensure the provision of a modern visitor information service
- share best practice and work with local and regional partners

3.5.3 Innovate

Local authorities will:

- take a lead, with local business organisations, in understanding and developing the visitor economy in the area
- use creative opportunities to deliver extra funding for place-shaping work
- consider schemes with a visitor economy focus which can support development and environmental improvements
- consider new service delivery options

3.5.4 Invest

Local authorities will:

- give public realm improvement and management high priority for action
- ensure relevant inward investment is visitor economy focused and linked to product development

- invest in those areas of place management that only the local authority can deliver and in projects that will make the place more appealing for residents and visitors

3.5.5 Improve

Local authorities will:

- promote quality in every aspect of the visitor experience
- improve skills within the sector
- include the development of skills relating to the visitor economy within all businesses support programmes and lobby other relevant organisations to do the same.

3.6 A full copy of the Charter is attached to this report, which also summarises the roles and responsibilities of the other key players.

4. **RECOMMENDATION** that:

4.1 Members support the City Council becoming a signatory to the Partner for England Place Making Charter.

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

1. None.