

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY

18 JANUARY 2007

EXETER TOURISM FORUM

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the proposal to establish an Exeter Tourism Forum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The visitor experience in the city is wide ranging and consists of more than just accommodation venues and attractions. Many other business sectors and organisations make a valued contribution to the visitor economy. The table below, although based on information from South West Tourism (2003), illustrate the value of tourism to Exeter and the wide range of organisations where visitor spend is distributed:

Business sector	£ million
Food & drink	36
Retail/Shopping	34
Accommodation	33
Travel	18
Visitor attractions/Entertainment	15
Other	13
TOTAL	£149

Source: South West Tourism (2003)

- 2.2 The Tourism Unit of the City Council manage the Tourist Information Centre and three visitor attractions and co-ordinate the promotion of the city to new and repeat visitors. Many other Units within the City Council also play a role in delivering/contributing to the visitor experience, such as Cleansing, Leisure & Museums, particularly the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Planning, the Archaeological Field Unit and Environmental Health Services.
- 2.3 Currently, activity focused on improving and managing the relationship with visitors is limited primarily to engagement with specific sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry in and around Exeter. At this time, organisations other than accommodation, attractions and some food and drink establishments, have limited involvement in developing new initiatives to improve the visitor experience and in supporting or being part of promotional campaigns for the city.
- 2.4 There is a real need to have a wider representative voice on behalf of the City in the Heart of Devon Tourism Partnership to ensure Exeter is strongly

represented in all promotional material and tourism development initiatives undertaken by the Tourism Partnership and by the emerging Devon Destination Management Organisation (DMO). The Devon DMO is covered in more detail in a separate report to this committee.

- 2.5 Exeter is not just recognised as a visitor destination but also as a place to invest in for regional, national and internationally recognised organisations. Improvements to the visitor experience make a direct contribution to the external perception of the city as a place in which to live and work.

3.0 EXETER TOURISM FORUM

- 3.1 In order to enable the City Council to best engage with wider range of organisations associated with tourism in and around Exeter it is proposed that a 'formal' group is established to help further develop the visitor economy in Exeter and to work with the City Council to implement the Visitor/Tourism Strategy 2007 - 2010.
- 3.2 Discussions are under way with the Exeter Chamber of Commerce on how we can best work together on developing a tourism group for the city. The Exeter Tourism Forum could either be a sub group of the Chamber of Commerce or a separate group altogether. The forum will not compete with the Chamber of Commerce or any other recognised Association within the city.
- 3.3 Main aims of the Exeter Tourism Forum are to:
- improve communication with the tourism and hospitality industry in and around Exeter
 - to inform, work with and support tourism businesses within Exeter to deliver the Exeter/Visitor Tourism Strategy 2007 - 2010
 - develop a skills development plan for the tourism and hospitality industry in and around Exeter
 - communicate existing and new legislation related to their business sector
- 3.4 A number of businesses within Exeter have already expressed an interest in developing the Exeter Tourism Forum. Representatives from the following organisations will be invited to attend an inaugural meeting of the Forum:
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|-------------------------------------|---|
| • City Centre Consortium | • Exeter Chamber of Commerce |
| • Exeter accommodation | • Exeter attractions |
| • Exeter eating out venues | • Retail Sector |
| • Public transport providers | • Exeter International Airport |
| • Entertainment and cultural venues | • Exeter and the Heart of Devon Hotels & Restaurants Association. |
| • Relevant City Council Units | |
- 3.5 It is anticipated that the Forum will comprise of about 25 representatives to enable effective involvement and active participation in the group.

- 3.6 There will be no charge to join the Forum. Members will be expected to provide information on how their business/business sector is performing, be proactive in looking to exploit opportunities for the benefit of the industry in the city and work collaboratively in changing and responding to visitor trends. It is anticipated that the group will meet three or four times a year.
- 3.7 Forum members will also have the opportunity to sit on time limited, task and finish groups to implement tourism projects from the Exeter Visitor/Tourism Strategy 2007 – 2010 and new projects developed through the Tourism Forum.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None other than officer time.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION that:-

- 5.1 Members support the development of the Exeter Tourism Forum.

**RICHARD BALL
HEAD OF ECONOMY AND TOURISM**

ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling the report:**

None