

North Warwickshire – Tourism Action Plan 2005 - 2007

Introduction

This action plan has been developed to direct the current and future work programme of the Tourism Development Officer.

Background

Since April 2003, significant changes have occurred within the tourism industry, including the transfer of responsibility for tourism to the Regional Development Agencies (namely, Advantage West Midlands (AWM)). In an effort to drive growth in this sector across the region and to develop a partnership framework, AWM commissioned the production of a Visitor Economy Strategy, which was subsequently published in 2004. The strategy placed a strong emphasis on the need to work at a sub-regional level to manage and market destinations. This led to the production of a Coventry and Warwickshire Visitor Economy Strategy.

Until now tourism objectives for North Warwickshire have been subsumed within the Local Economy Action Plan. However, following the production of Visitor Economy Strategies at regional and sub-regional levels it has become necessary to produce a dedicated tourism action plan for North Warwickshire which will drive future activity at a local level. The value of tourism is acknowledged as providing a significant contribution to the local economy, and the production of this documents serves to recognise its importance. It is also a key target for the Economic Development Service in the Corporate Plan.

Link to the Rural Strategy

It is intended that any tourism related issues which emerge as a result of the consultation for the Rural Strategy (which will be taking place in Spring/Summer 2005) will be integrated into this document. The Rural Strategy will also encompass tourism as being an integral component of the rural economy, and will serve as the key strategic document for the Visitor Economy in North Warwickshire. This document has been intentionally produced in advance of the Rural Strategy to demonstrate the range and scale of the role and to provide a greater understanding of the current concentration of activity.

Objective 1.0: TOURISM PRODUCT - To continue to develop the tourism product on offer and promote North Warwickshire as an attractive visitor destination.

	Action	Partners	Resources	Timescale
1.1 To use the Coventry & Warwickshire Food & Drink Awards as a means of recognising excellence in the catering industry, supporting local producers, and creating a unique selling point for eating establishments.	<p>Maintain a leading role on the steering group and contribute to the development of the awards.</p> <p>Actively work with North Warwickshire businesses, through regular written and verbal communication, to increase the number and quality of entries to compete effectively with the rest of the county.</p>	<p>Coventry & Warwickshire Food and Drink Awards Steering Group</p> <p>Private sector businesses</p>	<p>£500.00 p.a.</p> <p>Officer time in contacting the businesses</p>	<p>Meetings held on a 6 weekly basis or as required leading upto ceremony in October.</p> <p>Oct – Jul each year</p>
1.2 To contribute to the development of the Book Town Initiative in Atherstone and exploit the opportunity to increase visitor numbers to the town and the wider borough.	<p>Work with Book Towns International (B.T.I.) to promote the concept to visitors and the local community, and use the programme of events planned as a key attractor for the town.</p>	<p>Book Towns International, Market Towns Manager</p>	<p>Officer Time in working with B.T.I.</p> <p>Funding of £5,000 already allocated</p>	<p>Launch of initiative 14/05/05.</p> <p>Ongoing promotional work.</p>
1.3 To work with partners to use literary links to attract and disperse visitors around the region and sub-region.	<p>Work with partners in the sub-region to develop a literary trail, which encourages visitor's to circulate around the county</p> <p>Actively participate as a members of the AWM Literary Heritage Regional Theme Group. A concept paper has been developed and submitted by the group to AWM (21/03/05) which includes linking in the Book Town.</p>	<p>CWTOG</p> <p>AWM literary theme group</p>	<p>Officer time in attending development meetings.</p> <p>AWM funding of £71,000 being sought.</p>	<p>Dependent on priorities set in Sub-regional Action Plan</p> <p>2005/06 - Dependent on outcome of funding bid.</p>

<p>1.4 To raise awareness amongst visitors and the resident population of the Borough's rich history and heritage.</p>	<p>Continue to coordinate the Heritage Forum, as a means of bringing together like-minded groups to share information and best practice and to work together for mutual benefit.</p> <p>To develop joint promotion of the heritage sites across the borough (through printed literature, interpretation boards & web pages), and provide training for heritage volunteers.</p> <p>Feed the work of the Heritage Forum into the Local Strategic Partnership's Environment Group, as a means of maintaining a focus on the built heritage of the Borough.</p> <p>Continue to attend meetings and forge links with the Nuneaton and Bedworth Heritage Forum to develop cross-border activities including the Heritage Open Day's event.</p>	<p>Voluntary sector groups, Warwickshire County Council</p> <p>Heritage Forum led by the Tourism Officer</p> <p>Environment Group</p> <p>Nuneaton & Bedworth Heritage Forum, Nuneaton & Bedworth BC.</p>	<p>Officer time in coordinating meetings</p> <p>Application for Heritage Lottery of £37,000 submitted (decision expected May 2005). In-kind support of 84 hours of officer time.</p> <p>Officer time in attending environment group meetings.</p> <p>Officer time in attending meetings</p>	<p>Forum meetings held quarterly</p> <p>July 2005 – July 2006 (dependent on funding)</p> <p>Meetings held quarterly</p> <p>Meet every 6 months</p>
<p>1.5 To contribute to the development of an annual programme of events, by local people and groups, which will generate interest and increase visitor numbers.</p>	<p>Provide advice and guidance to groups and individuals who are staging events.</p> <p>Work with colleagues to coordinate the use of the Market Square in Atherstone and provide guidance on booking arrangements and requirements.</p>	<p>Voluntary sector groups/individuals</p> <p>Facilities Management, Finance, Market Towns Manager</p>	<p>Officer time in working with the groups.</p> <p>Officer time in developing procedure & monitoring arrangements</p>	<p>Assistance provided on request.</p> <p>April 2005. Ongoing involvement as required.</p>

<p>1.6 To explore opportunities to further develop the business tourism market and to filter the benefits created by this valuable sector to the wider economy.</p>	<p>Integrate with the work being done at a sub-regional level on developing and promoting the area as a conference and exhibition destination, and ensure that the facilities in North Warwickshire are recognised as providing a valuable contribution.</p> <p>Investigate the potential of producing a dedicated publication listing the conference venues in North Warwickshire, linking in the ancillary facilities which may also serve to benefit (e.g. restaurants, accommodation establishments etc).</p>	<p>Private Sector CWTOG External conference businesses</p> <p>Private Sector</p>	<p>Officer time in attending development meetings</p> <p>Officer time in coordinating the project</p>	<p>Dependent on priorities set in Sub-regional Action Plan.</p> <p>December 2005</p>
<p>1.7 To raise awareness of the range and quality of eating establishments on offer in North Warwickshire.</p>	<p>Work with the emerging food promotion group to develop joint marketing activities (e.g. food trails, incentive schemes etc)</p>	<p>Private sector businesses</p>	<p>Officer time in coordinating the project & communicating with businesses</p>	<p>December 2005</p>
<p>1.8 To continue to promote North Warwickshire as a destination and raise awareness of the tourism product amongst visitors and the local community.</p>	<p>Review content of current literature and update accordingly.</p> <p>Contribute to the review and production of the new North Warwickshire Borough Guide.</p>	<p>Tourism Officer</p> <p>Public Relations Officer Heritage Forum NWT A</p>	<p>Officer time in reviewing literature. Total re-print cost = £900 (£450=economic development budget/ £450=communication group budget)</p> <p>Officer time in co-ordinating the submission of information from the NWT A/ Heritage Forum</p>	<p>Printed by July 2005</p> <p>August 2005</p>

	<p>Maintain exposure in the press, and continually maximise opportunities to generate positive media coverage.</p> <p>Respond to enquiries resulting from marketing by means of telephone, email, and personal contact.</p> <p>Ensure that the visitor is well equipped with sufficient information prior to and during their visit in the form of literature to maximise their time.</p>	<p>Media contacts</p> <p>Leaflet stockists (eg libraries, offices, tourism providers)</p>	<p>Officer time in producing press releases and feature articles.</p> <p>Officer time in dealing with the query.</p> <p>Officer time in responding to requests for literature</p>	<p>Ongoing – according to opportunities & in response to media requests.</p> <p>Within 20 days of receiving the request</p> <p>Within 20 days of receiving the request.</p>
1.9 To develop the Undiscovered Warwickshire brand as a means of raising the profile of the three northern districts.	Work with partners to reinforce the 'Undiscovered Warwickshire' brand image through advertising and editorials in key publications	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council Rugby Borough Council	Officer time in developing marketing opportunities	Ongoing according to opportunity
1.10 To exploit existing 'honey-pot' tourism destinations within Warwickshire to attract and disperse visitors around the County.	Produce a 'Places to Visit' leaflet and encased posters to promote Warwickshire attractions and encourage movement between the sites	CWTOG	Officer Time – compiling information	March 2005
1.11 To work proactively with other organisations and local authorities to maximise opportunities and add value to tourism in North Warwickshire.	Develop cross-border links with neighbouring authorities beyond Warwickshire.	Regional Tourism Officer Group WMLGA – Tourism Officer Group	Officer time in attending meetings	West Midlands LGA meetings held bi-monthly.
1.12 To continue to work with the local community on tourism related projects as part	Attend meetings and monitor the progress of the tourism theme group, and contribute to the	Local Community Market Towns	Officer time in attending	Until end of programme

of the Market Towns Programme	development of projects and offer advice during the application process.	Manager	meetings & assisting in project delivery. Market Towns Funding allocated to tourism.	
1.13 Monitor visitor trends and capitalise on advances in technology to compete effectively in the market place.	<p>Investigate benefits and cost involved in being included within a Destination Management System (DMS)</p> <p>Ensure that the tourism section of the Borough Council website remains customer focused and contains relevant and up-to-date information.</p> <p>Continue to work with the Northern Warwickshire Tourism Association on the development of their website and explore the opportunity of linking it into touch-screen kiosks to be located in the libraries.</p>	<p>CWTOG led by WCC & South Warwickshire Tourism</p> <p>Economic Development, Market Towns & IT Officers</p> <p>NWTA Website designer/supplier</p>	<p>Officer time in attending meetings.</p> <p>Officer time in updating the Economic Development pages.</p> <p>£1,000 contribution towards development costs</p>	<p>Dependent on outcome of options appraisal (report due May 2005)</p> <p>Ongoing – monitored on monthly basis.</p> <p>Website – May 2005</p>

Objective 2.0: QUALITY – To raise the quality of visitor facilities and services on offer in North Warwickshire, and ensure that customer expectations are exceeded

	Action	Partners	Resources	Timescale
2.1 To ensure that tourism related businesses are of a high standard and effectively meet the needs of the visiting public.	Continue to promote the benefits of becoming quality graded	RCTBS Private Sector businesses	Officer time in communicating the information to providers	Ongoing - as appropriate

	Ensure that businesses are fully aware of their legislative responsibilities (e.g. the Disability Discrimination Act)	RCTBS Private Sector businesses	(eg letter, telephone, newsletter) Officer time in communicating the information to providers (eg letter, telephone, newsletter)	Ongoing – as appropriate
2.2 To ensure that visitors receive a positive reception to North Warwickshire.	Ensure awareness of, and access to, the Welcome Host suite of training courses.	RCTBS Private Sector businesses	Officer time in communicating the information to providers (eg letter, telephone, newsletter)	Ongoing – as appropriate

Objective 3.0: INFRASTRUCTURE – To ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to support the industry

	Action	Partners	Resources	Timescale
3.1 To ensure that destinations, including the market towns, meet and exceed the needs of the visitor in terms of the facilities and services on offer.	Work with colleagues in the Town, Borough and County Council's, as well as tourism related businesses, to ensure that visitor needs are being taken into consideration and that a positive image of the borough is being portrayed.	Town/Parish Councils, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council Private Sector	Officer time in communicating with partners	Ongoing – as necessary
3.2 To ensure the provision of adequate and appropriate tourism signage within the Borough.	To monitor changes to the national policy on white on brown signs and work with colleagues at Warwickshire County Council to understand its impact at a local level	WMLGA, WCC.	Officer time in communicating with colleagues at WCC	Ongoing – as necessary
3.3 To exploit the canal network as a key element of the tourism infrastructure as a means of bringing visitors into the area.	Capitalise on the large volume of boats which come through the Borough and make them aware of the towns, villages, and attractions located within close proximity of the canal	Market Towns Theme group. British Waterways Town Council	Market Towns, Town Council & British Waterways funding Plus other external funding to be sought.	Ongoing

Objective 4.0: BUSINESS SUPPORT – To maintain good communication with private sector tourism businesses to ensure that they remain well informed about issues which directly influence them.

	Action	Partners	Resources	Timescale
4.1 To raise awareness of the service provided by the Tourism Business Advisor for Coventry & Warwickshire (as part of the Regional Centre for Tourism Business Support), and achieve a high level of take-up.	Use established channels to communicate information (eg letter, newsletter, emails) about the Tourism Business Advisor and promote the series of lectures and networking meetings on offer.	RCTBS – Tourism Business Advisor, Private Sector Businesses	Officer time in communicating information	Ongoing – as appropriate & according to networking meeting schedule
	Work with the Tourism Business Advisor to monitor issues identified during diagnostic visits and provide follow-up support.	RCTBS – Tourism Business Advisor	Officer time in liaising with Tourism Business Advisor	As issues arise & at CWTOG meetings held bi-monthly.
4.2 To work with the Northern Warwickshire Tourism Association to aid its development.	Maintain regular contact with the Tourism Association, attend networking meetings to impart information and provide support where necessary.	NWTA Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council	£1,000 towards establishment costs	Ongoing support provided. Meetings held quarterly
	Contribute to the expansion of the membership base through promotion of its existence to potential new members.		Officer time in communicating information to businesses by letter or direct contact.	On a six monthly basis.
4.3 To ensure businesses are well informed about issues at a local, regional & national level which affect them.	Extend the distribution of 'North Warwickshire Tourism News' to businesses as a means of communication and sharing information.		Officer Time & internal production costs	On a quarterly basis – February, May, August & November

Abbreviations:

CWTOG – Coventry & Warwickshire Tourism Officers Group

NWTA – Northern Warwickshire Tourism Association

WMLGA – West Midlands Local Government Association

RCTBS – Regional Centre for Tourism Business Support

WCC – Warwickshire County Council