

CAB 32/09

Cabinet: 5 May 2009

REPORT ON THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT TASK GROUP REVIEW OF TOURISM

Report by Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Policy Development Task Group of 13 May 2008 agreed to review SCDC's tourism policy, as recommended by Cabinet. It was agreed that officers would prepare an initial briefing paper
2. On 10 June 2008 Policy Development Task Group received a paper 'Tourism in Suffolk Coastal' from the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for the Economy. It was agreed that a Tourism Policy Member/Officer Working Group would be established.
3. The Member/Officer Working Group met three times and, having considered a broad range of issues, prepared a tourism strategy which was approved by Policy Development Task Group on 10 March 2009.

Wards Affected:	All
------------------------	-----

Supporting Officer:	Catherine Thornber Economic Regeneration & Development Manager
----------------------------	---

Councillor C R C Hart

Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Economic Development

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None other than previously published works.

Reference: M:/ECONOMIC REGENERATION/2009/Cabinet report 5 May 2009

For further information, please contact Catherine Thornber, Economic Regeneration & Development Manager, on 01394 444472

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 10 June 2008, the Policy Development Task Group received a paper 'Tourism in Suffolk Coastal'. This preliminary paper outlined the following:

- Public sector structure for supporting tourism in England
- current SCDC policy
- the tourism industry in Suffolk Coastal
- SCDC's tourism promotion
- summary of background research and reports

1.2 It was agreed that a Tourism Policy Member/Officer Working Group would be established.

2. THE TOURISM POLICY MEMBER/OFFICER GROUP

2.1 The Group comprised the following Members and officers:

Cllr C Hart (Chairman)
Cllr R Kerry
Cllr M Ninnmey
Cllr Marianne Fellowes
Cllr S Burroughes
A Wright - Head of Community & Economic Services
C Thornber - Economic Regeneration & Development Manager
C Driver - Interim Marketing & Communications Officer, Community & Economic Services

2.2 Three meetings were held. The terms of reference of the group were:

- To conduct an in-depth analysis of background information and reports on tourism.
- To produce an over-arching policy document for tourism in Suffolk Coastal.
- To report back to Policy Development Task Group.

2.3 At its first meeting on 22 July 2008 the Group considered a broad range of papers:

- SCDC – Economic Development, Tourism & Regeneration Strategy (2004 – 2009).
- EET – Board and Constitution/European Marketing.
- Suffolk Tourism Partnership – membership.
- Local Plan – planning regulations for touring caravan and camping sites, static holiday caravans, cabins and chalets.
- SCDC Tourism Costs 2006 – 2008.
- Accommodation listed in SCDC Holiday Guide's 2005 – 2008.
- Quality assessed serviced and self-catering accommodation at 23rd July 2008 in Suffolk.
- Copy of Visitor Information Review for South East England – TICs.
- Car park numbers for countryside locations in the District.
- Paper on Tourism Cross District Working.
- Paper on Outsourcing of Tourist Information Centres.
- Transcript of an email regarding problems that current accommodation providers face.
- Waveney 2008 Holiday Guide.

2.4 A verbal update was made to the Policy Development Task Group on 9 September 2008. At this meeting the Task Group also discussed the SCDC Holiday Guide. It was agreed that the Guide was very good but that more information on things to do would improve it further.

2.5 On 3 December 2008 the Member/Officer Working Group considered the Council's existing tourism policy – used to inform both the work of the Economic Development Team and the Planning Department - and made recommendations for a revised policy. Officers subsequently prepared a draft policy for consideration by the Group.

- 2.6 The draft tourism policy was considered at the group's final meeting on 4 February 2009 and amendments were agreed. The policy is attached at Appendix 1. Officers also agreed to look at SCDC's practice of including only EETB inspected properties in its annual Holiday Guide.
- 2.7 The Policy Development Task Group reviewed the draft policy on 10 March 2009. The Task Group welcomed the policy, which it felt was particularly important in the present economic climate. The group commented on the need for increased promotion of cycling in SCDC and recommended that SCDC encourage the development of cycle routes in the District. It was agreed that the draft policy, revised to include reference to cycle paths, would be presented to Cabinet for approval.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Tourism Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

SCDC TOURISM POLICY

<p>Tourism is a key contributor to the Suffolk economy and SCDC's tourism economy is larger than that of any other district within Suffolk. Suffolk Coastal District Council recognises that tourism is an important business sector and it will therefore pursue the following policies:</p>	
PROMOTE THE DISTRICT	Promote the district as a place to visit; and develop further the district's tourism offering.
DAY TRIPS, SHORT BREAKS AND HOLIDAYS	Recognise the importance of both day trippers and staying visitors to the economy of the district.
MORE PLACES TO STAY	Encourage the development of additional tourist accommodation across the district, but with particular emphasis on Felixstowe and in the countryside.
MORE THINGS TO DO	Encourage the development of tourism products (eg resort facilities, accommodation, attractions, footpaths and cycle paths and local produce).
RELATED BENEFITS	Recognise the benefits to tourism provided by the creative/cultural industries and local food and agriculture.
LOCAL VISITORS	Encourage local and neighbouring residents to visit attractions in Suffolk Coastal.
SPECIAL EVENTS	Encourage special events to attract visitors to the district.
OPEN TO EVERYONE	Ensure that tourist facilities in the district are, wherever possible, inclusive and accessible.
SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS	Support the tourism industry in the district by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) engaging with tourism related businesses; (ii) lobbying, where appropriate, on behalf of the industry; (iii) working with partner agencies (eg Business Link, Suffolk Tourism Partnership, East of England Tourism etc).
CAREFUL MANAGEMENT	Ensure that SCDC maximises opportunities for tourism through appropriate management of its car parks, green spaces, leisure facilities and other assets.