

Subject:	Establishment of a Tourism Advisory Board in Brighton & Hove		
Date of Meeting:	Thursday 20 June 2013		
Report of:	Paula Murray, Assistant Chief Executive		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE/ EXEMPTIONS

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 To seek member support to establish a Tourism Advisory Board for Brighton & Hove. Members of the Tourism Advisory Board shall provide advice, support and guidance to Brighton & Hove City Council, ensuring that the Tourism Strategy and activities of Officers is aligned with the needs of the tourism industry as a whole in Brighton & Hove. The establishment of this Board would facilitate deeper engagement and collaboration between Brighton & Hove City Council and tourism stakeholders within the City.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the principle of establishing a Tourism Advisory Board for Brighton & Hove is approved.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

- 3.1 There has been a tourism and publicity team for Brighton & Hove for over 50 years. In 2005 the tourism team was rebranded as VisitBrighton.
- 3.2 During the period of VisitBrighton's existence, the tourism management landscape has changed significantly across the UK. Cuts in local authority budgets, combined with the rise (and subsequent demise) of the RDA structure and Government policy, has impacted greatly on how tourism is managed at a destination level.
- 3.3 In recent years many destinations have created an 'arms length' body in the form of a Destination Management Organisation "DMO" which typically has a Public / Private status or is an independent company. Further, such organisations usually have a Board of Directors or Advisory Board made up of senior figures within private companies, education establishments, tourism associations and local Councillors.
- 3.4 Whilst VisitBrighton is not officially recognised as a 'DMO'; since its establishment the unit has always maintained a close working relationship

with tourism businesses and organisations across the city. This relationship exists in several forms, from liaison groups (i.e. Attractions & Venues Forum and Conference Sales Managers Group) to the official VisitBrighton Partnership Scheme which has over 400 businesses in its current membership.

- 3.5 Over the last 18 months, there has been an increased call and activity to investigate new models of tourism management in Brighton & Hove from tourism stakeholders in the City.
- 3.6 In May 2012, VisitBrighton and the Brighton & Hove Tourism Alliance organised a 'Think Tank' event, facilitated by Blue Sail, an independent consultant, to explore how tourism is organised and supported in the City. Over 60 representatives from businesses and organisations attended the event and more provided input afterwards.

Tourism stakeholders expressed concerns that they had little or no influence on the City's Tourism Strategy and no official conduit through which their ideas and energies could be formally expressed. Stakeholders requested a channel through which business involvement could be focussed which they felt would foster greater sense of ownership and commitment among the business community.

Blue Sail recommended pursuing one of two options:

- Establish an Advisory Board for VisitBrighton **or**
- Look into the feasibility of converting VisitBrighton to an independent DMO

- 3.7 In autumn the Council appointed 'Stepping Out', to conduct an options appraisal to assess the potential of converting VisitBrighton to an independent DMO, and it is proposed that the advisory board considers further the findings of this report.
- 3.8 Having considered the options presented by Blue Sail and Stepping Out, it was deemed appropriate to pursue the establishment of a Tourism Advisory Board.
- 3.9 Members of the Board would be selected for their broad tourism knowledge, experience and awareness, in order that any decisions are made for the mutual benefit of the tourism industry as a whole in Brighton & Hove and for the greater good of the city. Nominations will be sought in the first instance from VisitBrighton's 450+ Partners.
- 3.10 Recommendations will be made by the Head of Service to the Economic Development & Culture Committee.
- 3.11 Please see Appendix 1 for the Draft Terms of Reference for the Tourism Advisory Board.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 VisitBrighton collaborated with the Tourism Alliance in appointing an external consultancy, Blue Sail, to conduct a 'Think Tank' event in May 2012 to discuss how tourism could best be supported in Brighton & Hove. Over 60 representatives from local tourism stakeholders attended the event.
- 4.2 VisitBrighton employed Stepping Out, a consultancy specialising in creating social enterprises from existing public sector services, to conduct an options appraisal to assess the potential of converting VisitBrighton to an independent DMO in September 2012.

Individuals consulted during this process included council officers including Tourism & Leisure Managers, Finance and Legal teams and the Chair of the Economic Development and Culture Committee.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications other than Officer time as the Board would be advisory only. Any subsequent recommendations would need to be considered and reported to Committee in due course.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michelle Herrington Date: 20/05/13

5.2 Legal Implications

The proposed Board would operate on a similar basis to the City Sports Forum and the Arts & Creative Industries Commission and the terms of reference should be agreed by Full Council.

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce Date: 20/05/13

5.3 Equalities Implications

The creation of a Tourism Advisory Board would offer a positive opportunity for a diverse contribution to tourism strategy within the city.

5.4 Sustainability Implications

Sustainability will form a significant part of the Tourism Strategy which will be reviewed by the Board.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications

Crime and Disorder will be considered as part of the Tourism Strategy which will be reviewed by the Board.

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

Creation of an Advisory Board offers the potential to both increase the engagement of local stakeholders and also to generate a wider recognition of the importance of tourism to the local economy. However, as the Board would be advisory only, there is a risk that members would disengage with the process and the Board would dissolve.

5.7 Public Health Implications

Public Health implications will be considered as part of the Tourism Strategy which will be reviewed by the Board.

5.8 Corporate / Citywide Implications

The setting up of a Board supports the council's priorities by offering:

- a more diverse contribution from local stakeholders(Tackling inequality)
- a wider engagement of the tourism industry (Engaging people who live and work in the city).
- better partnership working (Modernising the council)

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S)

- 6.1 The Blue Sail report considered and discounted the option of no change. The formation of a DMO is one that we would ask the Tourism Advisory Board to fully consider in due course.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 VisitBrighton currently works in partnership with over 400 businesses in the tourism sector across the City. It is imperative that BHCC maintain the support and engagement of this sector and formalises a channel through which this wealth of experience and expertise can inform strategy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1. Draft Terms of Reference for a Tourism Advisory Board in Brighton & Hove

Background Documents

1. [Tourism Strategy](#) 2008-2018
2. [Blue Sail report](#)

