



Title of meeting: Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 15 March 2024

Subject: Tourism and Visitor Economy Update 2023-24.

Report by: Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Steve Pitt

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update on activity and results related to the Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy 2023-28 and associated Visit Portsmouth Tourism Marketing Communications Plan 2023-24 and agree the new marketing plan for 2024-25.
- 1.2 To agree ongoing charges related to Visit Portsmouth Membership and other web and print advertising.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the Tourism Marketing and Communications Plan 2024-25.**
- 2.2 To approve the charges for membership and other advertising as outlined in the report and associated appendices.**

3. Background

- 3.1 An Information Only report was brought to committee in November outlining activity carried out by the team between March and September 2023. This report will give a general overview of the year and more detail around marketing activity, completed and planned, between October 2023 and March 2024.
- 3.2 Domestic Marketing
In the summer and autumn we ran a main season campaign with partners Victorious Festival, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Spinnaker Tower, Gunwharf



Quays, The D-Day Story and South Western Railway. The campaign consisted of large outdoor screens at Waterloo Station and a digital campaign running alongside and managed in-house. The London campaign with JCDecaux delivered over 8.94 million impressions and there were over 615,000 over-deliveries. The digital campaign delivered over 4.1 million impressions, reaching 1.18 million people and generating almost 38,000 link clicks. The full report 'Visit Portsmouth summer and autumn 2023 campaigns with partners' is attached at Appendix 1.

- 3.3 A further campaign will run for two weeks from 18 March again using the Waterloo Special and D6 screens on platforms at Waterloo from 18 March for two weeks. This will feature our two platinum partners, Victorious Festival and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, plus a general destination advert and one focussing on D-Day 80 and The D-Day Story.
- 3.4 In December the team promoted Christmas in Portsmouth with a designated landing page on the website compiling festive events and content, as well as the #EventAdvent running from 1 to 24 December, shining a light on specific events happening each day. Between 1 and 25 December the Christmas-related pages on the Visit Portsmouth website had 14,798 views (23.8% of the site total). These came from 10,463 users (33.1% of the total). The most popular page was for the Commercial Road Christmas Market, which alone generated 6,688 views from 5,074 users. This represents a year-on-year increase in views of 11.5%.
- 3.5 During the autumn months the team, working with the in-house design team, created the 2024 Visitor Guide and Mini Guide. We used a painting by a local artist as the cover image to raise awareness of the cultural and creative industries in the city - and because it is a great painting! The brochures were launched just before Christmas and in distribution from the new year.
- 3.6 A digital campaign to support distribution of the visitor guides and encourage staying visits to the city ran in January. The campaign reached 271,457 people, generating 529,971 impressions and 6,636 clicks through to the Brochures page on Visit Portsmouth (where you can download the brochure or request a printed copy).
- 3.7 Over the period 1 April 2023 to 31 January 2024 the Visit Portsmouth website had the following traffic:
840,422 sessions
631,685 users
1,419,996 page views
4,385,110 events ('Events' are Google's new term for engagement with a page or its contents. Examples of events include clicking on links, watching videos, scrolling 90% of the way down a page, or downloading material such as brochures or images.) Going forward we will seek to benchmark digital activity against other similar destinations.



- 3.8 The Visit Portsmouth social media channels for the same period had the following results:
Facebook:
Impressions - 3,036,703
Reach - 2,952,375
Clicks - 115,482
Reactions, comments and shares - 36,184
Instagram:
Impressions - 103,304
Reach - 97,180
Interactions (shares, likes, comments, saves and follows) - 4,729
Twitter:
Impressions - 304,000 (approx.)
- 3.9 All the above are for organic posts, i.e. unpaid, regular content. Across Facebook and Instagram combined our paid adverts also drove an extra:
Impressions - 5,795,902
Reach - 2,133,319
Clicks - 93,633
- 3.10 In January the team invested in a half-page advertorial in the Guardian Travel Guide at a late price and are working with South Western Railway on a full-page advertorial in the Evening Standard which will encourage visits to the city by train. This will be published the week before the London outdoor campaign goes live and was again offered at a favourable rate.
- 3.11 Team Portsmouth attended Excursions Trade Show at Wembley Stadium in January, with partners joining as stand sharers or with literature on display depending on their level of a membership. The show's visitors were principally group organisers and coach operators. 40+ contacts were made to follow up. A familiarisation visit to the city is planned for the Spring to include those who expressed an interest at this event.
- 3.12 To market to the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE) market Portsmouth will have a presence at the PA Show in London in February supported by Portsmouth Guildhall and the University of Portsmouth. A new Venues in Portsmouth brochure is being produced to showcase the many unique event spaces in the city.
- 3.13 Plans are now being made to showcase Portsmouth tourism businesses during English Tourism Week in March. This will include a range of offers for local residents at city attractions, venues and transport operators.
- 3.14 International Marketing
Much of our international marketing is carried out with regional partners such as Tourism South East, England's Coast, and Isle of Wight Tourism.



- 3.15 In January we had a joint pod with IOW on the South East England stand at Vakantiebeurs Tourism Show in the Netherlands. This is a very busy show with one trade day followed by three public days. The show was again very popular with more than 71,000 visitors in total. Lots of interest in our area and good knowledge of Portsmouth and good intention to visit. For the first time there were lots of queries about travelling around the UK by train, an indication perhaps of people choosing greener transport options for travel.
- 3.16 Portsmouth was represented at Visit Britain's Showcase Event in Greenwich in January to which a range of international buyers were invited, and the following day attended ETOA's (European Tourism Association) Britain and Ireland Marketplace event. The latter consisted of 30 face-to-face meetings with global buyers.
- 3.17 There was good interest in Portsmouth at these events and heartening that operators were again looking beyond established areas and routes for the first time since the pandemic. All meetings will be followed up and contacts shared with destination partners as relevant.
- 3.18 Marketing continues to the northern Europe market through activity booked with Tourism South East and as part of the England's Coast membership.
- 3.19 The Visit Portsmouth team continue to support the International Port especially as regards cruise visits to the city. Meetings are held with Shore Excursion companies and working with Shaping Portsmouth a further Cruise Business Event was held in November to enable local tourism businesses to talk to these excursion companies directly.
- 3.20 The Visitor Information Point at the Hard endeavours to open for every cruise call so those on the shuttle bus exploring the city independently can pick up more information. In addition, the volunteer welcome organised through Shaping Portsmouth at the International Port continues to be really well received by cruise visitors.
- 3.21 The team also work closely with Brittany Ferries and are considering further marketing to the French market in partnership with Isle of Wight Tourism.
- 3.22 Partnerships
Local, regional and national partnerships continue to be crucial to the team's work, with an income target set at £100,000 annually for marketing support from local partners. In 2023 we piloted a new membership scheme, enabling partners to sign up once for a range of activity with annual membership options from £1,500 to £17,000. There is still the option for partners to opt into selected activity such as Visitor Guide or website advertising on a stand-alone basis if they wish.
- 3.23 The partnership levels, website advertising options and Visitor Guides advertising rate cards are attached at Appendices 2, 3 and 4. Mostly we have



kept charges the same as the pilot year with any increases or changes being within current inflation figures. Any increases for the publication rate cards will be made later in the year and be in line with, or less than, inflation.

- 3.24 To date the team have achieved income of just under £110,000, with all of this being invested in increased marketing including fully financing the design and print of the destination publications and a major part of the main season campaigns.
- 3.25 Regional and national partnerships are also key, and we will continue with our SLA agreement with Tourism South East and membership of England's Coast both of which support domestic, group and international marketing. We will also further explore opportunities with our near partners such as Isle of Wight Tourism.
- 3.26 Regular Destination Network Meetings are held enabling partners to get updates on marketing activity and hear from tourism businesses across the city enabling better network and collaboration. In 2023-24 nine meetings have or will be held.
- 3.27 Sustainability
In February the team launched the new Visit Portsmouth Green Tourism Award scheme. This is a free scheme open to all tourism businesses in the city and is based, with permission, on a successful similar scheme on the Isle of Wight.
- 3.28 The team continue to encourage sustainable transport to the city, with all the main season campaigns including a South Western Railway message, this year supplemented by the Evening Standard advertorial. Sustainable travel around the city is also encouraged with information online and the new refreshed Millennium Promenade guide books available from Information Points.
- 3.29 Research
The latest Visit Portsmouth Visitor Survey was conducted in December 2023, building on (and comparing with) our existing annual survey results. 2,372 people filled out the online questionnaire, in which they were divided into one of three categories: Visitors (those who had been to Portsmouth within the past two years), Lapsed Visitors (those who had been within the past two to five years) and Non-Visitors (those who hadn't ever been, or had done so more than five years ago).
- 3.30 We asked visitors a range of questions including one of overall visit enjoyment. Over half of Visitors awarded the full five stars, and with a further 42% giving four stars it means that 92.5% were pleased with their trip.
- 3.31 For the first time we asked a question about how much the role of the environment/green travel plays when deciding where and how to travel. 40% of those surveyed stated they gave it some consideration.
- 3.32 Despite this travel by car was still the top choice for 78.3% of visitors. There was also a good showing for those who travelled by train, selected by 21.2% of



Visitors (up markedly on the 16% who said the same last year, a good result given the number of strike days).

3.33 The most stated reason for visiting the city was for sightseeing (65.2%), followed by shopping (50.4%), and then visiting friends and relatives (22.3%). Most visitors (55.6%) came to Portsmouth on a day trip, with 15% staying one night, 18.5% staying for two and 10.9% staying three or more nights. The full report: '2023-24 Visit Portsmouth Survey results' is available at Appendix 5.

3.34 Visitor Information

The team provide a Visitor Information Service in the Hard bus station, open seven days a week April to September and 4 days a week the rest of the year. The staffing of this is funded almost fully by the sale of vended food and drink, tickets for local attractions and gifts in the shop. In the period March 2023 to January 2024, the service answered over 22,000 in person queries.

3.35 Information Points are also provided at Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery, The D-Day Story, Gunwharf Quays and Central Library.

3,36 The Marketing and Communications Plan 2024-25 is attached at Appendix 6, outlining planned activity for the forthcoming financial year. More detail will be added as membership are confirmed and full available budget agreed.

4. Reasons for recommendations

4.1 The Marketing and Communications Plan 2024-25 provides a blueprint for activity throughout the year, again enabling better planning while always remaining a living document to be adapted as opportunities arise.

4.2 The piloted membership model has enabled the team to better plan activity, having certainty in partner spend earlier in the year, rather than asking for financial support for each marketing element. It has also enabled us to formalise the support offered to partners and report back to them on this.

5. Integrated impact assessment

5.1 An integrated impact assessment is attached at appendix 7.

6. Legal implications

6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.



7. Director of Finance's comments

7.1 The charges related to Visit Portsmouth Membership and other web and print advertising has been reviewed taking into account the need to maximise income whilst ensuring the service remains competitive. The Tourism service will deliver the recommendations contained within this report within the approved budget

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Visit Portsmouth summer and autumn 2023 campaigns with partners - report.
- Appendix 2. Visit Portsmouth Membership Opportunities 2024-25
- Appendix 3. Visit Portsmouth publications - display adverts rate card 23-24
- Appendix 4. Visit Portsmouth publications - Accommodation adverts rate card 2023-24
- Appendix 5. 2023-24 Visit Portsmouth Survey results.
- Appendix 6. Visit Portsmouth Tourism Marketing Communications plan 2024-25
- Appendix 7. Integrated Impact Assessment, Tourism and Visitor Economy Update March 2024

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development