

Title of meeting:	Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development (PRED) Decision Meeting.
Date of meeting:	4 September 2018
Subject:	Portsmouth and the Visitor Economy - update on activity
Report by:	Director of Culture and City Development
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update on marketing activity undertaken by the Visitor Services Team in 2017 and 2018 to promote Portsmouth in line with the long-term Visitor Marketing Strategy.
- 1.2 To demonstrate how minimal marketing budgets have been maximised to the greatest effect.
- 1.3 To outline proposed marketing activity for the rest of 2018/19

2. Recommendations

- 2.2 To note the annual achievements in the City's marketing and branding plans particularly the buy in from destination partners to support marketing campaigns.**
- 2.3 To agree the continuation of the marketing communications plan for 2018/19 as shown in Appendix 2.**

3. Background - Portsmouth and the Visitor Economy

- 3.1 Tourism is crucial to Portsmouth's economy. The latest economic impact report showed Portsmouth welcomed around 9.4 million visitors in 2015 (8,700,000 day visitors and 737,000 staying visitors), contributing £610.3 million to the local economy. The latest employment figures show 12,777 jobs are now supported by tourism. This represents 12.1% of all jobs in the city.¹ (See appendix 3 - charts showing growth 2008-2015).

¹Economic Impact of Tourism - Portsmouth 2015, Tourism South East

- 3.2 There have been major improvements to the city's tourism offer in recent years, including the re-opening of the Mary Rose Museum in the Historic Dockyard, the opening of the new Hotwalls Studios in Old Portsmouth and, in early 2018, the transformed D-Day Story with exterior landscaping and interactive water feature in front of Southsea Castle.
- 3.3 Major sporting and music events have also made a great impact on the city, raising its profile both nationally and internationally. Victorious Festival continues to grow in stature and popularity. Meanwhile, Ben Ainsley's racing team, now part of the INEOS brand, has achieved new investment to challenge a second time for the America's Cup.
- 3.4 The largest ship ever built for the Royal Navy, HMS Queen Elizabeth, arrived in Portsmouth in 2017, swelling visitor numbers and providing more widespread exposure for the city.
- 3.5 Work continues to strengthen the 'Portsmouth, the Great Waterfront City' brand, through use on all domestic and international marketing collateral in print and online, use in partner campaigns and for events such as the London Underground campaigns and the World Travel Market.
- 3.6 Locally, the Great Waterfront City brand is used in transport signage and on taxi livery, for example. Gunwharf Quays has also recently added waterfront to its new branding: 'Gunwharf Quays, waterfront outlet shopping'.
- 3.7 The approved Visitor Marketing Strategy sets out the strategic direction of tourism marketing for three years from March 2017. It aligns with the new events strategy and the service priorities in the Culture and City Development Business Plan 2016-19, to drive brand awareness of the city, grow visitor numbers and generate income.
- 3.8 The strategy was informed through the Government's Tourism Action Plan, the latest research and insights from Visit Britain and Visit England, and through consultation and information sharing with Tourism South East and the local Destination Marketing Partnership - made up of key stakeholders across the city and region.
- 3.9 The local visitor economy is at the heart of the city's vision for the future set out in the Culture and City Development Business Plan 2016-19 to become "a great waterfront city; a place where people want to live, work, visit and study and where business and new enterprise choose to locate and invest."
- 3.10 The strategy takes into consideration the evolution of tourism in England over the past five years, including, most recently, the market post-Brexit. It considers changes in technology and shifting consumer attitudes, and it clearly defines how best to market the city in order achieve the visitor growth targets set out in the plan.

- 3.11 It looks to capitalise on opportunities identified by Visit Britain and Visit England, such as the growing inbound tourism market from China and other international markets. It addresses how digital technology, particularly mobile, influences the way in which consumers research and book their holidays, and how to successfully market Portsmouth as a destination that meets consumer demands for simplicity and authenticity.
- 3.12 National, regional and local partnerships remain a key element of the strategy, which sees us working with regional bodies, as well as national and international bodies such as Visit England and Visit Britain, to take advantage of routes to market through trade exhibitions and overseas events.
- 3.13 A new Destination Steering Group will be developed this year with the initial Chair being Helen Bonser-Wilton, the CEO of the Mary Rose. This group will build on a successful platform of cooperation working and will be key to encouraging greater buy-in from businesses across the destination to new campaigns and projects, complementing the activity already taking place.

4. Overview of marketing activity undertaken in 2017-18

- 4.1 Marketing collateral was produced in the form of 60,000 Portsmouth Visitor Guides and 168,000 Mini Guides, in six languages. These publications have been distributed extensively throughout the UK and overseas. Preparations are now underway for the 2019 publications.
- 4.2 In 2017 the Visitor Services Team took over the production of the marketing publications, including all advertisement sales, writing all the copy and working directly with the in-house design team to create the final designs.
- 4.3 The income from advertising (including the additional sales made) enabled the funding of the design and print of the 2018 guides, plus one additional part-time member of the marketing team. This will continue to be the case this financial year for the 2019 publications.
- 4.4 The team also manages the destination's principal marketing tool, the Visit Portsmouth website, annual costs of which are funded from on-site advertising each year.
- 4.5 In line with the 2017 Visit England themes, seasonal campaigns were run during 2017/18, which targeted different audiences (as defined in the marketing strategy). The general themes were: City Breaks/Coastal Tourism and Wellness/Cultural Tourism. These were further refined depending on the time of year and audience demographic.
- 4.6 The main channels used for these campaigns were digital, PR and outdoor; the latter being run in conjunction with our major destination partners (Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Gunwharf Quays and Emirates Spinnaker Tower).

- 4.7 The outdoor campaign ran for 4 weeks in July 2017 across 100 London Underground poster sites, supported online via Visit Portsmouth and partner websites. The posters were viewed by 2,639,500 people around 7.27 times each giving a reach of 19,189,165 views.
- 4.8 The Visit Portsmouth website ran banner adverts for each campaign. The website was visited over 901,580 times in the year 2017-18. The London Underground campaign helped drive a 13.3% month-on-month increase in site Visits, with better quality traffic too (Pages Per Session were up 1.72% and Average Session Duration rose 1.3%, whilst Bounce Rate dropped by 0.14%).
- 4.9 Facebook activity continued to grow steadily, with notable growth in the London and West Midlands regions (both target markets). The Facebook page now has over 34,400 Page Likes (a 14.7% year-on-year increase and exceeding the KPI of 33,000 likes), with an annual Post Reach of nearly 6.3 million people (a 34% year-on-year growth).
- 4.10 On Twitter the audience grew from around 10,400 to just over 12,800 followers in the past year (a 23.1% annual increase v KPI of 15%). This works out as an average of 7 new followers every day. On a typical month tweets reached 59,800 people, rising to 71,700 in the summer months.
- 4.11 Visit Portsmouth also has both iPhone and Android apps which have been downloaded more than 10,000 times.
- 4.12 Regular e-newsletters are sent out detailing the big events happening in any given month, as well as one-off mail outs for Easter, half-term, Christmas etc. This has also formed part of our advertising offer, with attractions paying to have more prominence in our mail outs, as well as on the Visit Portsmouth website.
- 4.13 A Christmas campaign in 2017 highlighted the seasonal offer in the city and also included a specific digital campaign for venue partners consisting of a 'Shows' banner on the home page of Visit Portsmouth and a dedicated landing page showcasing all the great evening entertainment on offer. This was supported by a social media push through Visit Portsmouth and a PR campaign organised by the venues themselves.
- 4.14 Press and public relations continues to be a key marketing tool. Our service level agreement with Tourism South East (TSE) includes, along with a range of marketing support, a PR service for the destination. This sees TSE pitching stories and responding to media enquiries for travel, short-breaks and holidays. During the course of the year, TSE successfully pitched 37 stories to regional, national, international and online publications.
- 4.15 From January to September 2017, TSE secured 3 press trips (one of which resulted in a quarter-page article in The Sun highlighting short breaks for families). In the final quarter of the year they were asked to refocus their efforts to concentrate on the launch of the new D-Day Story; this resulted in 12 preview trips by journalists, a

half-page article in The Sunday Times Travel section prior to its opening, and a piece in the Sunday Telegraph in June 18.

- 4.16 Tourism South East organised a Go China meeting in London in March 18, attended by 20 Chinese journalists and writers. Visit Portsmouth, Gunwharf Quays and the University of Portsmouth attended and, as a result, journalists from the Chinese news website NetEase visited the city in May. As a result of their tour around Portsmouth they published a very positive review on their website.
- 4.17 The opening of the new bus station at the Hard in 2017 provided an opportunity to improve the welcome to the city by reinstating a Visitor Information offer in this major visitor arrival point. The new Visitor Information Pod has been warmly welcomed by visitors and local residents and is funded through the sales of vended food and drink, gifts and attraction tickets. It is worth noting that the loss of any of these income streams would mean the Information Point would no longer be sustainable.
- 4.18 The Visitor Information Service includes Information Points in both the new D-Day Story and Portsmouth Museum, offering a great pre-visit service and welcome to visitors. This encourages them to make the most of their time in the city and, crucially, to stay longer and spend more. The service also manages Portsmouth Tourism Guiding Service and Portsmouth Greeters, both of which offer a valuable service, enhancing a visit to the city.
- 4.19 Group market - work has continued to market Portsmouth to the Travel Trade, working with partners across the destination to attend trade fairs, arrange familiarisation trips, work with Tour Operators and Travel Agents, and promote joint offers for groups visiting the city.
- 4.20 Business tourism - we continued working with the Hampshire Conference Bureau to promote hotels and conference venues in the city, and to organise familiarisation trips for conference and event organisers. This resulted in two successful familiarisations trips to the city taking place in 2017-18.
- 4.21 Further promotion to the European market has taken place through joining TSE's Near Europe and Scandinavia campaigns, as well as attendance at the successful Vakantiebeurs consumer show in Utrecht, Holland, and ITB Berlin, Germany. Working with partners enables us to attend international trade fairs and events by pooling resources and sharing stand time etc.
- 4.22 Portsmouth also achieved coverage in the US. Although we were unable to attend the Visit Britain US marketing event in Los Angeles, the National Museum of the Royal Navy attended and took our destination marketing material on our behalf.
- 4.23 The team has also represented Portsmouth at major national and international marketing events such as ETOA's (European Tour Operators Association) Britain and Ireland Marketplace and Visit Britain's flagship event, Explore GB. For the third successive year Portsmouth had a standalone presence at the World Travel Market

event in London, with partners Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and Emirates Spinnaker Tower.

5. Marketing activity - April 2018 to date

- 5.1 Much of the marketing activity undertaken in 2017-18 will be repeated in 2018-19, as these are efficient and effective ways to promote Portsmouth to the different market sectors - for example we are continuing the use of the SLA with TSE for Press and PR coverage and are targeting the group and business markets through joint working with destination partners. (Appendix 4 shows partner contribution for major campaigns)
- 5.2 International markets will be reached by attending the large national marketing events: VIBE (Visit Britain's International Business Exchange), Britain and Ireland Marketplace and Explore GB (Visit Britain's flagship international marketing event).
- 5.3 Portsmouth will be promoted direct to the international market by attendance at three trade fairs in northern Europe and as part of a Scandinavian campaign with TSE. Initial PCC spend for this campaign is in the region of £1,400, with partners contributing just over £4,000.
- 5.4 Since the beginning of March 2018, there has been a strong focus on the opening of the D-Day Story, with the launch of the new website, branding, experiential marketing, and advertising campaigns all being initiated in order to create brand awareness and drive visitor numbers. The team has supported this with a landmark poster at Waterloo station, across social media and with links to the Visit Portsmouth website.
- 5.5 In line with the Marketing Communications Plan for 2018-19, the destination marketing is customer-centric and 'always-on', with Visit Portsmouth running concurrent partner campaigns highlighting the diversity and breadth on offer within the city. Using digital, social media and publications, the success of these will be measured at the end of the year as previously (see paragraphs 4.8 - 4.10).
- 5.6 There will also be Portsmouth City Council's seasonal online campaigns tailored towards Attractions, Shopping, Culture and the Waterfront, plus specific event campaigns such as Christmas in the City and Evening Entertainment.
- 5.7 The major destination partners (PCC, Gunwharf Quays, Emirates Spinnaker Tower, National Museum of the Royal Navy, Mary Rose) have developed a joint domestic marketing campaign to promote Portsmouth in London in July and October 2018.
- 5.8 The London campaign includes coverage on the London Underground stations: 100 posters for 4 weeks in July and 50 posters for a further two weeks in October, supported online with banner adverts on the Visit Portsmouth website and a digital social media campaign.

- 5.9 The overall cost of this campaign is £55,000, with PCC contributing £11,000 and partners £44,000. The campaign will also fund joint attendance at the World Travel Market in November, promoting Portsmouth at this global event.
- 5.10 The team also leverages national campaigns, localising them for events happening in the city e.g. English Tourism Week, Heritage Open Days and Armed Forces Day.
- 5.11 In 2018 the Visitor Information Service launched a new online training module 'Portsmouth Champions' aimed at staff and volunteers who work on the front-line in the city interacting with visitors. This is a free-to-use training resource that anyone can access and we will continue to push this out across the destination.
- 5.12 The Visitor Services and Development Manager has worked hard to try and access funds from the Visit Britain Discover England Fund budget. Successes have seen Portsmouth included in the 'Connections Project' and the 'Creating England's Literary Legends' project. Both of these projects are aimed at the US Travel Trade market with Portsmouth highlighting the D-Day Story connection and Dickens and Doyle.
- 5.13 The team supports the International Port to encourage more cruise call passengers to spend time in the city; we are currently working with partners to create a number of themed itineraries to market tours into Portsmouth by cruise ships visiting both the city and nearby Southampton. These itineraries can also be used for group marketing.
- 5.14 In July and August a qualitative research project is being undertaken, with the majority of funding coming from the East Solent Coastal Partnership team. This will enable us to better understand the demographics and drivers of consumers visiting Portsmouth and enable us to identify the best target markets for future destination marketing to maximise engagement.

6. Reasons for recommendations

- 6.1 To highlight the importance of tourism to the local economy and the work carried out by the Visitor Services Team in conjunction with local, national and international partners.
- 6.2 To agree continued marketing of the city in line with the Visitor Marketing Strategy 2017-20.

7. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

- 7.1 An EIA is not required for this report. This is a report on current marketing activity derived from an existing marketing strategy that looks to increase visitors and spend. The report does not have any impact on local groups or services.

8. Legal comments

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

9. Director of Finance comments

9.1 The approved budget resources of the Tourism Service has been fully utilised to support the marketing campaigns detailed in this report. The success of these can be attributed to the strong focus on Partnership working with other PCC departments, stakeholder organisations in the City and both national and international partners.

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 Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture and City Development

Appendices:

1. Portsmouth City Council Visitor Marketing Strategy 2017-20
2. Marketing Communications Plan 2018-19
3. Chart of Economic Impact Estimates 2008-2015
4. Charts of planned activity 2018-19 with partner contributions

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 Economic Impact of Tourism Portsmouth 2015, Headline Figures, Tourism South East	Document available on request.

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on 4 September 2018

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 Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development.