

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

Date of meeting: 11 December 2020

Subject: Visit Portsmouth Update and Tourism Marketing Communications Plan 2021-2022

Report by: Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To update on Visit Portsmouth activity during the period 1 April 2020 to date and plans for tourism recovery to 2022.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Agree the Visit Portsmouth Tourism Marketing Communications Plan 2021-2022.

2.2 Note achievements by the Visit Portsmouth team in 2020.

3. Background

3.1 Tourism is crucial to the city of Portsmouth, in a normal year supporting around 12,700 jobs (12.1% of all jobs in the city) and overall income in excess of £610 million¹.

3.2 The Visit Portsmouth Team leads on destination marketing for the city, working alongside the Museums and Visitor Services Team with a base at Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery, enabling efficient joined-up working.

3.3 This work includes the management of the destination's main digital platforms - visitportsmouth.co.uk and associated social media, mail-shots etc. and the creation of the destination publications - including all the copy writing and advertising sales of both.

3.4 As the Covid 19 pandemic reached the UK and we entered lockdown in March 2020, the team worked hard to inform and support local tourism businesses

through this difficult time with a range of mail-outs, individual catch up meetings and wider destination meetings.

- 3.5 Marketing activity included creating a 'Virtual Portsmouth' for potential visitors to explore, at one point asking people not to visit, and then a staggered re-opening of the destination offer with associated marketing to match. A report was circulated in October 2020 detailing activity undertaken and results - appendix 1.
- 3.6 The team worked with regional and national partners where possible including being part of a successful bid led by Visit Hampshire which was awarded £300,000 of government funding for the 'Unlock Summer' campaign. The Visit Hampshire campaign landing page saw 117,437 page views during the campaign, an 876% increase on the previous period. Across the entire Visit Hampshire website traffic increased by 232% during the campaign period, to 740,636 and links through to Portsmouth's destination page on Visit Hampshire increased by 170%.
- 3.7 Portsmouth is also part of the 'England's Coast' national campaign which has received additional funding from the Discover England Fund run by Visit England/Visit Britain. This campaign will aim to boost off-peak visits to the coast this winter and spring, through work with a PR agency, social media activity, webinars for businesses and a digital marketing campaign. Trade relationships will be maintained which will ensure the coast continues to feature prominently in operators' programmes. New content will be focused on experiences for the domestic and EU markets.
- 3.8 We also joined Tourism South East's recovery campaign, jointly with The D-Day Story. This campaign runs until March 2021 and targets domestic consumers, including independent travellers, couples, families, multi-generational travel, and small groups. This is a digital campaign including website coverage, video and showreel content, themed press releases, E-newsletters and a social media campaign. Messages will be flexible and sent at the appropriate time, as guidelines change.
- 3.9 We continue to work closely with our regional destination partners on joint marketing initiatives to promote the central south coast area, especially key for the staying and international markets who often consider a region to visit rather than a single city. We are looking to formalise this marketing relationship to enable us to work more closely with the LEP's Solent Economic Recovery Plan and also to assist with a bid for the Government's planned Tourist Zone
- 3.10 The Visit Portsmouth Tourism Communications Plan 2021-2022 (Appendix 2) has been created to aid the recovery and growth of the local visitor economy over the next two years.
- 3.11 Visit England/Visit Britain have estimated that domestic tourism will not return to its peak numbers until 2024 and inbound tourism by 2025. Brexit could add a

further dimension to this of course.

- 3.12 As the situation develops the team are ensuring they keep up to date with tourism industry insights and use these, along with local partner feedback and the national and global situation regarding restrictions etc, to inform planned campaigns and ensure we can adapt these as required.
- 3.13 Much of our marketing will have a digital focus and we will launch a refreshed version of visitportsmouth.co.uk in December, which will include a winter/Christmas section to include both information about destination attractions and events to help businesses as they re-open, along with a virtual element for people to enjoy at home. We will continue to champion our website to potential visitors and also to local residents as the 'go to' place to find out about all things Portsmouth, via a range of inspirational and eye catching digital marketing via our Visit Portsmouth channels.
- 3.14 Working with our destination partners will of course continue to be key and plans for main season campaigns aimed at key target markets will be developed throughout the year. We want to ensure we are inclusive and will be working hard to reach out to all tourism related businesses in the city, big and small. All such businesses will be entitled to free product listings on our website and support with promoting their businesses through our digital marketing activity.
- 3.15 Our focus will primarily be re-building Portsmouth's domestic market for day trips and short breaks. Our lead campaign will be 'Portsmouth, Put the Wind in Your Sails' - messaging originally agreed with destination partners for 2020 but put on hold. This will encourage visits in a safe manner and highlight the benefits of tourism to people's wellbeing - whether it be pure escapism, the great outdoors, discovering our wide culture and history or learning a new skill for example.
- 3.16 Smaller scale international activity will also continue to ensure Portsmouth remains on the world stage and continues to feature in itineraries and people's plans as visits start to resume. The forecasting shows Europe will be our first area of inbound recovery and this will be a focus for activity, including in the Normandy region.
- 3.17 We will also continue to bid for regional and national funds as they become available and work together with our regional and national partners to enable maximum promotion for Portsmouth. For example planned joint working with South Western Railway in 2020-21 includes a poster campaign with a value of £750,000, plus mailings to their database of 200,000 and digital promotion via their website. In addition Southern Rail supported the 'We Create' markets with posters at stations and want to increase this collaborative work in the future.
- 3.18 Supporting our colleagues at the International Port will be key both as regards Brexit and messaging and in the recovery of the cruise market. We will also continue to work closely with Brittany ferries, providing promotional information

or their new ship for example.

- 3.19 In the New Year we will launch our new destination publications as part of the 'Portsmouth - Put the Wind in Your Sails' campaign. Additional funding has enabled us to offer our partners much reduced advertising costs to enable continued promotion during these difficult times. The publications have also been written in a more timeless manner so that they can have a longer shelf life if required.
- 3.20 This launch will be accompanied by a toolkit for destination partners to use so they can embrace and benefit from the 'Portsmouth - Put the Wind in Your Sails' campaign messaging.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 Ensure that the Visit Portsmouth team are able to continue to support local tourism businesses, big and small, during this period of recovery.
- 4.2 Work across the destination to re-build the visitor economy to pre-Covid 19 levels, including supporting the many tourism businesses and assets owned and operated by Portsmouth City Council.

5. Integrated impact assessment

- 5.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment is attached

6. Legal implications

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

7. Director of Finance's comments

- 7.1 The service will deliver the recommendations within the approved cash limit.

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

Appendices:

- Appendice 1 - Visit Portsmouth Update and Tourism Marketing Plan
- Appendice 2 - Visit Portsmouth - Tourism Marketing Communications Plan 2021-2022
- Appendice 3 - Integrated Impact assessment

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
Visit Portsmouth Marketing and Tourism Update October 2020	Appendix 1
Visit Portsmouth Tourism Marketing Communications Plan 2021-2022	Appendix 2

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

ⁱ Economic Impact of Tourism in Portsmouth, 2015 estimates, Tourism South East