

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

**Date of meeting:** 16 November 2021

**Subject:** Visit Portsmouth Marketing Update 2021

**Report by:** Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** No

**Full Council decision:** No

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**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To update on activity undertaken by the Visit Portsmouth Team to market the destination and support tourism businesses through recovery during 2021.

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 **Agree continued marketing as outlined in the report and previously approved communications plan.**

2.2 **Note the achievements of the team and acknowledge the support from destination partners.**

**3. Background**

3.1 The Visit Portsmouth Team are funded by Portsmouth City Council with financial input from partners across the city to support destination marketing. The prime focus of the team in 2021 has been to support local tourism businesses through this challenging time and aid recovery.

3.2 The Tourism and Marketing Manager has attended regular national meetings with Visit England/Visit Britain and DCMS to keep the team up to date with planned activity and abreast of changing research into customer sentiment to aid marketing planning.

3.3 Nationally the Government launched the Tourism Recovery Plan which has an aim to:  
*'Recover domestic overnight trip volume and spend to 2019 levels by the end of*

*2022, and inbound visitor numbers and spend by the end of 2023 – both at least a year faster than independent forecasts predict.'*

- 3.3 As opportunities for activity arise from this national plan the Visit Portsmouth Team will make partners aware. We have already incorporated the TXGB national booking system on the Visit Portsmouth website and shared details of how to take part in the national 'Great Days Out' campaign.
- 3.4 An independent England review into Destination Management Organisations was held earlier in the year and Portsmouth hosted one of the regional consultation events. The report has now been circulated and we await a decision on the outcomes and recommendations this included.
- 3.5 The Visit Portsmouth Tourism Marketing Communications Plan 2021-22 was agreed last year and will continue to inform marketing through 2022, refreshed as required in line with any changes in the market.
- 3.6 In addition the Visit Portsmouth Tourism Recovery Plan was launched in March 2021 to support businesses through recovery (Appendix 1).
- 3.7 Following our destination publications launch in January 2021 we commenced the 'Portsmouth, Put the Wind in Your Sails' campaign in earnest in March. This campaign aimed to support local businesses, build confidence in Portsmouth as a place to visit and regain our domestic market - 3 key actions in the Tourism Recovery Plan.
- 3.8 The campaign has exceeded expectations. Destination partner buy-in was achieved for the main season elements, a great achievement given the difficult times businesses have experienced, and visitor numbers to the city's tourism businesses have seen recovery during the summer months. A report outlining achievements so far against this campaign and other activity is included at Appendix 2.
- 3.9 The Visit Portsmouth website statistics also indicate a level of recovery. Comparing like-for-like lockdown restriction periods, 19 May - 30 Sept 2021 v 23 June to 4 November 2020, website users increased by 45%, sessions by 50% and pageviews by 48%.
- 3.10 Additional activity was also made available via the government's 'Welcome Back Fund', supported by European Regional Development Funding (ERDF), which will include marketing through to March 2022. The team used the funding in the summer of 2021 to support seafront businesses and encourage more visits to the area by creating a seafront trail, employing a waterfront welcome team and funding increased litter picking and toilet cleaning.



- 3.11 The seafront trail has been really well received by visitors as were the Waterfront Welcome Team and a brief report on the latter's activity is included at Appendix 3. The funding has also paid for the 'Welcome to Portsmouth' lamp post banners across the city and for a piece of economic impact research that is being carried out by Tourism South East, results expected in 2022.
- 3.12 Regional work with partners is a key part of our marketing and this year has included being part of Visit Hampshire activity around 'The Hundred' cricket event. Portsmouth featured in a Hampshire-wide TV advert that played alongside some of the matches. We are looking to repeat this advert, with regional partners, as part of the 'Welcome Back Fund' activity in the spring.
- 3.13 Further activity with Tourism South East this year, in line with our agreed SLA, has included a virtual 'Excursions' group fair event, coverage in their domestic consumer and group campaigns and a bespoke press and PR service. We will also look to join future international campaigns, with an initial focus on the northern Europe and North America markets.
- 3.14 In addition to the virtual Excursions event we also attended the Group Leisure and Travel Show in October and have booked a stand at the Excursion Show in January 2022. Group activity is always funded jointly with destination partners sharing the cost of stand booking and attendance.
- 3.15 We also continue to work closely with our colleagues at the International Port and will be supporting further cruise marketing initiatives, to maximise the benefit of visiting cruise ships to the local economy. We are also planning a marketing campaign in and around Caen in northern France to attract French visitors back to the city once travel restrictions are simplified and interest has grown.
- 3.16 As a member of England's Coast we continue to be included in their activity both to the domestic and European markets. This has seen new Portsmouth content on the England's Coast website, e-shots to German and Dutch markets and domestic press and PR.
- 3.17 The team also attended the virtual Explore GB event in March - Visit Britain's flagship international marketing event. 70 meetings were held with international buyers from 21 countries in our target areas - against 40 meetings held in 2019. Although there was much uncertainty at the time given restrictions to travel, there was good interest as regards future bookings when the situation is safer and more stable.
- 3.18 Work is also taking place to drive business tourism to the city in the form of meetings, incentive packages, conferences and events. Our updated 'Venues in Portsmouth' pages on Visit Portsmouth are attracting interest as this sector starts to recover and we have achieved a listing on the Visit England/Visit Britain national business site, one of only 23 destinations listed nationally. We are

working with partners to look at specific marketing events to attend as a destination and jointly fund as we do for group/travel trade marketing.

- 3.19 It should be noted that the above is just a brief overview of some of the team's activity over the last 12 months and more detailed reports with results are available in the appendices.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 Continue recovery of tourism markets and support local tourism businesses through this difficult period.
- 4.2 The work of the Visit Portsmouth Team and especially the partnership working across the city is crucial for continued growth.

#### **5. Integrated impact assessment**

- 5.1 Integrated impact assessment attached at appendix 4.

#### **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 No specific issues have been identified. However, the legal implications of each key activity within the plan can be assessed as each of these projects are taken forward.

#### **7. Director of Finance's comments**

- 7.1 Any costs arising from the recommendations contained in this report will be met from existing budget resources.

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Signed by:

**Stephen Baily**  
**Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services**

#### **Appendices:**

1. Visit Portsmouth Tourism Recovery Plan 2021
2. VP 'Portsmouth, Put the Wind in Your Sails' Marketing Report Sept 2021
3. Waterfront Welcome Team Report, Oct 2021

4. 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
The Tourism Recovery Plan, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tourism-recovery-plan">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tourism-recovery-plan</a>
The de Bois Review - an Independent Review of Destination Management Organisations	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-destination-management-organisations-dmos">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-destination-management-organisations-dmos</a>

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**