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Title of meeting:	Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Briefing Meeting
Subject:	Update on Tourism and Visitor Economy activity, April to September 2023
Date of meeting:	17 November 2023
Report by:	Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
Wards affected:	All

1. Requested by

1.1. The Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services.

2. Purpose

2.1. 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. The report covers the period March to September 2023.

3. Information Requested

3.1. **Domestic marketing - main season campaigns**

In March we marked English Tourism Week with a season launch event with tourism partners at the Mary Rose and used the week to promote a range of offers from local tourism businesses to raise awareness and encourage local residents to visit attractions and events on their doorstep.

3.2. The new Portsmouth Visitor Guide and Mini Guides were already in distribution by this time and this continued throughout the report period, staying visits being encouraged with both hard copy distribution and a digital download campaign.

3.3. We also launched our first major campaign for 2023-24, funded jointly by Visit Portsmouth, South Western Railway, Victorious Festival, Gunwharf Quays and The D-Day Story.



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- 3.4. The campaign's aim was to raise awareness of Portsmouth and drive visits over the Easter period. The outdoor aspects, booked through Global Media, focussed on Waterloo station with large digital advertising posters at the entrance to and on the escalators into the London Underground.
- 3.5. The campaign ran with the new tagline for the year: *'Portsmouth, the Place to Be in 23'*. An in-house digital campaign ran alongside using the same creative. The digital posters were booked for a total of 907,200 plays, Global went on to deliver 1,119,273 - a 23.38% increase. The in-house digital campaign generated over 1.2 million impressions, with a reach of more than 440,000. Full details are available in the Visit Portsmouth March-April 2023 Campaign Report at Appendix 1.
- 3.6. In June we launched our summer campaign. This and the following autumn campaign were paid for by Visit Portsmouth and partners Victorious Festival, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Spinnaker Tower, Gunwharf Quays, The D-Day Story and South Western Railway.
- 3.7. We again wanted to focus on encouraging rail travel while reaching the largest amount of people. For this campaign we booked advertising space with JC Decaux after the company offered a selection of different options to what had been utilised previously, including the large impactful advertising boards at Waterloo Station. Partners agreed to trial these new options which offered good value for money.
- 3.8. As well as the poster sites there was an in-house digital campaign running alongside (and beyond), with budget set aside for Meta (Facebook and Instagram) ads, in addition to the mobile ads included by JC Decaux as an added extra.
- 3.9. The London campaign with JC Decaux drove over 4.76 million impressions, with nearly a quarter of a million over-deliveries. Our in-house digital campaign delivered over 2.6 million impressions, reaching 1.28 million people. A click through rate 140% above the industry average was achieved, and our cost per click was just 22% of what others typically pay. The Visit Portsmouth website saw increases in users (10.6%), sessions (11.2%), page views (6.4%) and pages per session (0.6%) during the campaign. Full results including imagery available in the Visit Portsmouth Summer 2023 Campaign Report at Appendix 2.

3.10. **Digital Marketing**

Between April and September 2023, the Visit Portsmouth website welcomed 411,623 users, who drove 958,134 page views. Over the same period our reach on Facebook was 1,851,373 and we saw an increase in page likes of 463. Our Instagram reach was 142,382 and we had 520 new followers. On Twitter/X we saw



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185,500 post impressions and had 182 new followers.

- 3.11. Partners have featured heavily in social content, including a share of Warrior Webcam for Portsmouth Historic Dockyard (that reached 42,900 accounts), and live updates from the Victorious Festival that over the weekend had a reach of 55,152 partners also featured heavily in PR/outreach (detailed below), in imagery, content and video.
- 3.12. **Press and PR Support**
The team are of course keen to support all things tourism across the city and try to attend and then post on our digital channels about new openings and events as often as possible.
- 3.13. In the past six months this has included Comic Con, Spinnaker Tower Sky Bar, Standing with Giants, PortsFest, Look Up Portsmouth and Clipper Race Start - plus blogs for Coronation events, Victorious Festival, Great South Run, Portsmouth International Kite Festival, Armed Forces Day and Southsea Food Festival.
- 3.14. Video was created and displayed at large events to promote the wider city, including on the big screens at Victorious Festival between acts and at the Formula Kite European Championships.
- 3.15. Video and imagery was also shared widely for others to promote Portsmouth to their own networks. Among those provided content to share were England's Coast, Tourism South East, Key Cities, South Western Railway and Southern Rail. New content has also been written and submitted to the likes of Wightlife, Family First, Visit Britain/Visit England and Waterside magazine - detailed further in point 3.31.
- 3.16. **Portsmouth Partnerships**
Partnership working is key to the success of Visit Portsmouth activity - we are a very small team - and to the success of Portsmouth as a thriving visitor economy.
- 3.17. In 2023, with Director approval and partner support, we trialled a new membership option for businesses to pay once for a range of activity throughout the year and enable better planning for all.
- 3.18. Four levels of membership were trialled for tourism businesses, excluding accommodation members who had a separate scheme with three levels. When setting prices, we ensured partners were not paying any extra and were actually getting more support with a range of digital marketing extras added at no cost.
- 3.19. The team are regularly reporting back on activity and results to partners and we will look to continue the scheme in future years.



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3.20. Regional and National Partnerships

Our principal regional partnership is with Tourism South East (TSE) who provide a range of marketing services and support. Most of our international marketing is carried out in conjunction with TSE along with Group and MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and events) marketing.

3.21. Since the pandemic the Visit Portsmouth team have picked up MICE marketing using the VIP - Venues in Portsmouth - pages on the Visit Portsmouth website. In 2023 we joined the TSE Meet Beyond London campaign, funded jointly with a selection of partners, and as part of this recently hosted a familiarisation visit for event bookers from PA Life to the city.

3.22. Another key regional and national partnership has been via paid membership of England's Coast who provide a range of activity, information and support, marketing both in the UK and to the Europe market, this year under the banner of 2023, Year of the Coast.

3.23. The regional railway companies continue to be key partners as we strive to encourage more visits to the city by sustainable transport, a challenge during periods of strike action.

3.24. South Western Railway continue to be our biggest supporter offering both free promotion of the city and financial support to our London-centric campaigns. We also work closely with Govia Thameslink which operates Southern Rail, providing regular information and updates to enable them to promote the city.

3.25. To further encourage visitors to the city to walk around or use public transport when they arrive by train, we created and funded an eye-catching large poster display in Portsmouth and Southsea station including a map showing places of interest and the average walking times to each.

3.26. Nationally we continue to work with Visit England/Visit Britain, attending and supporting marketing events, webinars etc and working with relevant team members to update Portsmouth content and push out Portsmouth news stories.

3.27. International Marketing

In March 2023 the Visit Portsmouth team attended Explore GB, Visit Britain's principal international marketing event. Over four days 50 meetings were held with international buyers with a focus on Europe and North America markets. A number of providers already had Portsmouth on planned itineraries and others were looking to add for 2024, follow up emails and any requested additional information was sent to all.



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- 3.28. With a continued focus on North America and Europe, seeing these as the quickest markets to regain traction in the UK, we signed up to TSE international marketing programmes for the US and Canada, France, Germany and Netherlands. This activity will take place between September 2023 and March 2024.
- 3.29. Visit Portsmouth were also partners in the Brittany Ferries Visit Britain Gateway-funded marketing campaign this year. This aimed to drive more French visitors to visit the UK via Brittany Ferries south coast ports. The campaign over-delivered on all metrics with bookings of around £350,000 in value across the campaign.
- 3.30. The International Port is another key partner, and a further aspect of our international marketing is supporting and growing the value to the city's businesses of visiting cruise liners. The team are members of the Shaping Portsmouth Cruise Programme and support the volunteer cruise greeters with information and publications. In addition, the team liaise with shore excursion companies, providing information and itineraries as requested and will be co-hosting the next Cruise Business Event in November.
- 3.31. The team also run an Information Hut at Victorious to promote the wider city offer. Activity is also carried out to make sure that those tourism businesses outside of the festival footprint get additional promotion in the form of physical banners, a blog and social media posts in the run up to and during the event.
- 3.32. As part of our service level agreement TSE provide a press service for the city and have pitched 23 stories so far this year - results still pending. Their activity also included 67 social media posts, generating 20.9k impressions and just under 111k page views of Portsmouth pages on their website.
- 3.33. The Visit Portsmouth team also respond directly to press requests, so far this year this has included writing copy for Wightlife, Booking with Kids and Great Days Group Travel, an interview on BBC Solent breakfast, hosting a Visit Britain influencer visit and articles in inews for the Mary Rose 4D, Southsea Food Festival and the Queens Hotel.
- 3.34. The team provide a Visitor Information Service in a stand-alone point at the Hard in the bus station and also in the D-Day Story and at Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery. The Hard Info Point remains popular and welcomed over 17,000 visitors between April and September this year. We have also assisted the library service in the creation of an Information Point in Central Library and keep other points at the International Port and Gunwharf Quays well stocked with leaflets about the city.
- 3.35. We continue to hold regular Destination Network Meetings which are well attended and well-liked by our city partners. To date we have held four meetings since April and are well on target to exceed the agreed number of six per year.



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- 3.36. Working with the Safer Streets project we have been able to replace and update all the Millennium Promenade panels, the Millennium Promenade booklet and create a new Kid's Guide. The new panels and booklet include QR codes to link to pages on Visit Portsmouth where more information can be found including a section on famous Portsmouth women and Safe Spaces in the city.
- 3.37. A further report will follow in March 2024 to update further regarding activity against the strategy objectives.

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Visit Portsmouth March-April 2023 Campaign Report

Appendix 2: Visit Portsmouth Summer 2023 Campaign Report

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