

Report of:	Head of Economic Prosperity
Contact Officer:	Debbie Harris
Contact Number:	01543 464490
Portfolio Leader:	District Development
Key Decision:	Yes
Report Track:	Cabinet: 14/10/21

Cabinet
14 October 2021
Destination Staffordshire Partnership

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members as a follow up to the March 2019 Cabinet report setting out a review of the Destination Management Partnership (DMP) / Destination Staffordshire and proposed arrangements for tourism delivery going forward.
- 1.2 To advise on a series of options that should be considered when making decisions on how best to proceed with tourism delivery in Cannock Chase.
- 1.3 To seek approval to meeting increased subscription fees of £15K per annum for the next two years being sought by the DMP from its public sector partners.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Cabinet to agree that the Council should retain its membership of the DMP until at least 31 March 2024. Ahead of this date, a review of the DMP should take place to evaluate the value for money from the service being provided with the Head of Economic Prosperity providing a further report to Cabinet.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agrees to the request to increase the Council's membership contribution to Destination Staffordshire for 2022-23 and 2023-24 from £3,000 per annum to £15,000 per annum.
- 2.3 That Cabinet agrees that the cost of the increased financial contribution is met from the existing budget allocated to the 2020-2030 Economic Prosperity Strategy given that the proposal delivers against the Council's aspiration to develop the District as an attractive visitor destination.
- 2.4 To delegate authority to the Head of Economic Prosperity in consultation with the Head of Law & Administration and Portfolio Leader for District Development to enter into any agreements necessary to monitor performance and to agree a set of performance indicators that can be managed and monitored on a regular basis.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

Key Issues

- 3.1 Staffordshire County Council (SCC) hosts and part funds the operations of the DMP and it has recently carried out a review of the work of the DMP. As part of this review there was some acceptance that change needed to take place not least due to the impact of Covid-19 and the decline in private sector sponsorship.
- 3.2 SCC has indicated that it wishes to build on the extensive support it has already delivered to Staffordshire businesses in the past year. SCC wish to develop a revitalised DMP with other local authorities and has an ambition to reignite tourism in Staffordshire and attract more visitors to the county and deliver greater economic impact.
- 3.3 The recently launched Staffordshire brand and story and brand-new refreshed approach to marketing the county presents a further opportunity to 'reboot' the activities and priorities of the DMP and provides the impetus to reinforce Staffordshire's position as a tourism destination.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that the proposals will help the visitor economy emerge from the current difficult period, take advantage of the 'Staycation' opportunities that lie ahead and build a better future for tourism and for the people who work within the industry in Staffordshire.
- 3.5 The private sector members of the DMP are not able to meet their funding obligations (£90K) in the short term hence the requirement to increase subscription fees for public sector partners as a means of sustaining the partnership. Furthermore, through targeted activity the DMP is inviting new businesses to join the partnership at zero or reduced cost for the 2021 season.
- 3.6 SCC have indicated its refreshed focus for the DMP will include the following:
 - **Targeted marketing and campaigns** to maximise Staffordshire's profile and to attract more visitors.
 - **Overseeing and commissioning research and intelligence** to inform the activities of the visitor economy sector and to shape the county's offer and future priorities.
 - **Lobbying and advocacy work** to influence key policy makers to shape the direction of the sector and maximise Staffordshire's role and profile.
 - **Business support activities and signposting** to help the visitor economy renew and transform following on from the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 3.7 As part of the approval of the Council's Economic Prosperity Strategy in January 2020 it was proposed to invest additional resources into developing the Council's own capacity through the appointment of additional staff focussed on Tourism delivery. A key ambition of the Strategy is to develop the District's visitor economy and creating a distinctive and identity for the District. Additional revenue to cover increased subscription fees of the DMP for a 3 year period (including this financial year) can be met from the existing budget allocated to the Economic Prosperity

Strategy. Cabinet should note that the items agreed in the previous budget report related to the Economic Prosperity Strategy haven't been able to be delivered due to the Covid-19 pandemic and a wider review of the Strategy will be progressed by officers. Members should be aware that should they choose to invest in the DMP at the increased subscription level that this will be in place of any local tourism activity.

- 3.8 It is proposed that payment of the subscription fees to the DMP will be encapsulated into a Grant Recipient Agreement (legal agreement) or a Service Level Agreement between the parties so performance can be easily monitored and measured. This will require performance indicators to be agreed upfront and reviewed on a regular basis by officers.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.9 A direct approach has been made to the Leader of the Council following a review of the DMP undertaken by SCC to seek a substantial increase in current subscription fees.
- 3.10 A decision on retaining membership of the DMP is necessary in order to concentrate limited Council resources on delivery and to enable the Council to maximise the potential to develop the District's visitor economy.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Developing and promoting the visitor economy directly contributes to the Council's corporate priority to support economic recovery.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The DMP was launched in April 2006, and the Council became a Board Member during the initial developmental phase of the Partnership. The current Board Member representative is Cllr Mike Sutherland (Portfolio Lead for District Development).
- 5.2 The Council currently pay £3,000 per annum in terms of its annual subscription fees for being a Member of the DMP. These costs are met from existing Tourism (Economic Development) budgets.
- 5.3 The DMP (Destination Staffordshire) is a primarily public Destination Management Organisation. Its primary administration and operational delivery sit within Staffordshire County Council's Business and Enterprise team, and the majority of its funding comes from the public sector (either by local authority or via grant funding).
- 5.4 The overarching priority of the DMP is to set the direction for Staffordshire's visitor economy sector and deliver activities to attract more visitors into the county.
- 5.5 The DMP has a total annual operating budget of £260k (2020/21 budget), Staffordshire County Council is the main funding partner (contributing £125k per annum). In addition, from the District and Borough Councils of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent City Council a further £45k in public sector funding is currently

committed, giving an overall public sector contribution of circa £170k.

- 5.6 Staffordshire is home to world-class visitor attractions that attract visitors from across the UK and beyond every year. Furthermore, the county's tourism, hospitality and leisure sectors contribute £1.87billion to the Staffordshire economy every year.
- 5.7 Cannock Chase is a significant contributor to the Staffordshire tourism offer and offers a variety of visitor attractions including the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and linked attractions but also new attractions such as the new McArthurGlen Designer Outlet. Maximising the benefits from visitors to the Outlet remains a key objective of the Council and the concept of linked trips to other areas of the District is essential to create prosperity for all parts of the District. Furthermore, the District hosts the 2022 Commonwealth Games mountain biking event and there are huge opportunities to build the profile of the District in the run up to and during the games and create a lasting legacy.
- 5.8 Since March 2019 (when the last review was carried out) the Council has produced its own Visit Cannock Chase leaflet to coincide with the opening of the Designer Outlet which promotes the tourism offer to a variety of visitors. This leaflet has been sponsored by a few partners and is being distributed across not just the immediate District but wider West Midlands. The leaflet had cost initially circa £5060 to produce but after taking sponsorship into account this figure has dropped to circa £180 which has been met from tourism budgets.
- 5.9 QR posters and codes have also been promoted for the visit leaflet and work has been carried out to make the leaflet interactive to users.
- 5.10 A small Tourism budget circa £16,000 has been accrued over recent years in readiness for the production of the visit leaflet and it is hoped that these funds can aide further joint marketing with McArthurGlen going forward and /or pay for a small social media/marketing campaign for the leaflet's promotion.
- 5.11 There is no staff resource at present focussed solely on delivery of a Tourism service for the Council. Staff resources will need to be considered if the Council wishes to provide a full Tourism Service going forward as current staffing levels do not provide capacity to perform this function in Economic Development.
- 5.12 In June 2021, the Chair of the DMP, wrote to the Leader of the Council, requesting that the Council reviews its financial contribution to the DMP which is currently £3,000 per annum (Appendix 1). The letter requested that the Council along with other District/Borough Councils in Staffordshire increases its contribution to £15,000 per annum, recognising that the private sector partners are not able to contribute funding at this time, due to the difficulties that they have faced during the Covid-19 pandemic. In return for the enhanced level of contribution, the DMP will seek to enhance its capacity to support the visitor economy and grow the value and volume of tourism in Staffordshire.
- 5.13 In July 2021, the Leader of the Council confirmed in writing to the Deputy Leader of Staffordshire County Council and Chair of the DMP, that the Council would be able to increase its contribution to £15,000 for 2021/22, utilising existing budgets (Appendix 2). However, the Leader confirmed that any increased contribution from 2022/23 onwards, would need to be subject to a Cabinet report and decision.

A request to the DMP was made for further information on the benefits of increasing the Council's contribution.

5.14 In August 2021, the Assistant Director for Business & Enterprise at Staffordshire County Council wrote to the Head of Economic Prosperity setting out the benefits of an 'enhanced contribution' (Appendix 3). The enhanced offer sets out proposals focused on a number of themes as follows:

- (i) Targeted marketing and campaigns to enhance Staffordshire's profile.
- (ii) Overseeing and commissioning research and intelligence to inform the activities of the DMP and shape the offer and future priorities.
- (iii) Lobbying and advocacy work to influence key policy makers and maximise Staffordshire's role and profile.
- (iv) Business support activities to help local tourism businesses recover and renew following the pandemic.
- (v) Launching and building the new Staffordshire story and place brand resources to promote and grow the Staffordshire visitor economy.

5.15 Following the request from the DMP, the Council has a number of options for consideration of how best to proceed including:

- (A) Continue to support the visitor economy in a limited way via tourism leaflet and existing membership contribution to DMP i.e., £3,000 per annum.
- (B) Enhanced contribution to DMP - increasing contribution from £3,000 to £15,000 per annum over a 3-year period (including this financial year).
- (C) Invest in our own tourism offer – potentially via creating a Tourism Officer post, ringfencing a dedicated marketing and promotion budget and creating our own digital offer.

Pros and cons of each option:

Option	Pros	Cons
A	Status Quo – no change to service delivery and reduced ability to influence. No further cost to the Council.	Doesn't maximise the potential of the District or its assets. Unlikely to capitalise upon major opportunities within the District. Destination Staffordshire may not be sustainable without enhanced contributions from Districts/Borough Councils due to reduced ability of private sector to contribute funding.
B	Enhanced two tier working with the County Council and partnership with private sector	Making sure the District gets its share of investment can be difficult due to competing interests.

	and other District/Borough Councils. Potential increased profile of District's offer as a destination due to enhanced DMP marketing campaign.	At this time, the DMP is unable to quantify the actual potential benefits in terms of increases to value / volume of the District's visitor economy. As such it is difficult to provide to members an estimate of the potential return on investment.
C	The Council keeps control of its tourism activity and create own identify and brand.	Less impact as budgets considerably smaller. Significant cost of establishing Tourism Officer post, marketing budget and digital offer.

5.16 To maximise the benefit of an increased contribution to the DMP, there are a number of ideas that the Council can put forward to improve the current Staffs DMP offer for Cannock Chase; these include:

- Developing an overnight /short stay package for each District and a campaign and use a marketing distribution company to produce some marketing material to support promoting this – success of this can be measured by actual effect on overnight stays with local hotel operators.
- Have a rotating feature to Staffordshire DMP (advertising, website, social media campaign) so each District gets chance to promote its own tourism offer and brand.
- Develop a package of linked attractions and experiences to encourage visitors to spend more time within the county and visit different Districts.
- Maximise the opportunities created by the new McArthurGlen Designer Outlet, further enhancement of the Cannock Chase AONB offer (in a sensitive and controlled way) and Commonwealth Games Mountain Biking Event which will have global reach and profile.

5.17 Overall it is considered that the Council has a real opportunity to benefit from a 're-booted' and refreshed DMP and there is scope to capitalise upon the increased demand for domestic 'staycations' over the next few years. There is the potential to benefit from greater scale and impact by participating in a county wide Destination Management Partnership and the District has a growing offer that is a key component of the county wide visitor offer. The Council could seek to invest its resources in its own tourism resource, but this is unlikely to deliver the same level of impact than an enhanced DMP.

5.18 It is recommended to Cabinet that the Council agrees to increase its financial contribution for the next two years. However, it is important that the Council regularly reviews the performance of the DMP and monitors its effectiveness. A formal review should take place before 31st March 2024, to enable the Council to determine whether to continue with its membership and what level of financial contribution should be provided, with the expectation that the private sector should be able to increase its contribution in future years. This review will be progressed

by the Head of Economic Prosperity with a report coming back to Cabinet setting out how the DMP has helped to develop the District's visitor economy with appropriate performance management included to enable members to consider its future direction.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

A report was taken to Cabinet on 30th January 2020 which presented the Economic Prosperity Strategy for adoption; the original Action Plan was as follows:

Item Of Expenditure	2020-21 (£)	2021-22 (£)	2022-23 (£)
Marketing / Branding Campaign	50,000	50,000	50,000
Tourism / Town Centre Officer Post	0	45,000	45,000
Skills Officer Post	0	40,000	40,000
Growth Opportunities Study	30,000	30,000	0
Visitor Economy Strategy	0	15,000	0
Managed Workspace / Business Hub Feasibility Work	30,000	0	0
TOTALS	110,000	180,000	135,000

The Plan was approved and £110,000 was built into 20-21 Approved Revenue Budgets, however because of COVID the implementation of the Plan was delayed and the whole of the Budget unspent and rolled over into 2021-22.

The Total funds are being reallocated as part of a refreshed Economic Prosperity Strategy currently being produced by the Head of Economic Prosperity. Should Members approve the increase in the Council's membership contribution to Destination Staffordshire for 2022-23 and 2023-24 from £3,000 to £15,000 per annum then the annual increase in costs will be funded from within the approved budgets.

There are no additional Financial Implications for the Council as a result of this report.

6.2 Legal

Consideration will need to be given as to whether legal agreements will be required to cover the performance management and monitoring matters that are mentioned in the report. If these matters are set out in legal agreements then the performance measures will need to be clearly defined and the methodology and frequency for performance reporting and monitoring will need to be set out in the agreement.

6.3 Human Resources

The tourism function is part of the Economic Development Service but there are no dedicated Tourism officers within the Service.

The DMP employ its own staff via SCC to provide their services. Staffing costs will be borne by SCC as the host organisation for the DMP.

6.4 Risk Management

Biggest risk is to make sure the Council obtains value for money and tangible outputs/benefits from its investment in subscription fees. A proper mechanism and legal agreement between the parties would help to address this alongside key performance indicators and regular monitoring.

6.5 Equality & Diversity

None

6.6 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices to the Report

Appendix 1: DMP letter to Council Leader

Appendix 2: CCDC letter of commitment £15K for 2021/22

Appendix 3: Staffs DMP – Enhanced offer

Previous Consideration

Cabinet 14 March 2019 –Review of Tourism Provision

Background Papers

None

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Our Ref: AH/DMP

Contact: Andrea Sammons
Tel: 01785 276261
Email: andrea.sammons@staffordshire.gov.uk

Date: 17th June 2021

Destination Staffordshire
Staffordshire County Council
2 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street,
Stafford, Staffordshire ST16 2DH

Councillor Olivia Lyons
Leader of Cannock Chase Council
Civic Centre
Beecroft Road
Cannock
WS11 1BG

Dear Olivia,

Re: Contributions to Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership

This has been a year when Staffordshire, its Districts, Boroughs, and businesses have faced unprecedented challenges. It is clear that the public sector has most definitely “stepped up” working to protect our economy and to ensure that when we are through these uncertain times, our economy can once again thrive. As Staffordshire’s Destination Management Partnership (DMP), we must commend the efforts of you and your Officers.

It has also been a year of great uncertainty and resilience from our private sector partners who have had to deal with lock downs and uncertainty over when they can trade again. What is clear is that the sectors of leisure, tourism and hospitality have been hardest hit by the pandemic, through not being able to trade and with uncertainty over future regulations and requirements. But it is also clear that the government has provided unprecedented levels of support which is so very much welcomed.

Collectively the sectors have a significant value within Staffordshire, supporting some 32,000 jobs and contributing £1.87 billion to our economic output. Yet the true impact of Covid 19 has yet to be quantified and now is the time that the DMP is asking that we can, together, refocus and double our efforts to support these sectors who employ so many people from our communities.

At the Destination Staffordshire Board meeting on 9th March 2021 an outline of proposals designed to kickstart our visitor economy was set out, discussed and positively received by Board members. The proposals are centred around four key themes underpinned by two enablers as set out below:

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Destination Staffordshire is a public and private sector organisation formed to develop, manage, and promote Staffordshire’s visitor economy

Enablers:

- **Enhanced two tier working between District and Borough Councils, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council**, creating greater connectivity between Staffordshire wide and local issues and delivery mechanisms.
- **Utilising the Staffordshire story and place brand resources**, Enjoy Staffordshire assets and established channels to promote and grow the Staffordshire visitor economy and bringing the story to life through compelling examples.

Key themes:

- **Targeted marketing and campaigns** to maximise Staffordshire's profile and to attract more visitors.
- **Overseeing and commissioning research and intelligence** to inform the activities of the visitor economy sector and to shape our offer and future priorities.
- **Lobbying and advocacy work** to influence key policy makers to shape the direction of the sector and maximise Staffordshire's role and profile.
- **Business support activities and signposting** to help the visitor economy renew and transform following on from the Covid 19 pandemic.

Based around this revised activity, the need for us to show strong leadership and work collaboratively to promote our respective localities that collectively fall under the Enjoy Staffordshire brand, has never been greater.

Staffordshire County Council has recognised the fragility of our current approach in testing times and has proposed that it will make an enhanced financial investment into Destination Staffordshire. This allows us to give the sector resilience and a renewed impetus as we seek to attract more visitors to our broad range of assets and encourage more people to enjoy our wonderful visitor economy offer.

This equates to an additional £200,000 investment in 2021/22 with the emphasis of promoting our leisure, tourism, and hospitality sectors in summer 2021. Staffordshire County Council are working to appoint a Visitor Economy Partnership Development Manager to act as an advocate for our sectors which is welcomed, equating to an additional investment of around £195,000 over three years.

To support the private sector membership of the DMP, and to complement the activity of the County Council around place branding, we are mindful of the pressures that you face but would be most grateful if you could review your current contribution of £3,000. When the DMP launched there was consensus that each partner funded the DMP to the tune of £15,000 per annum and we are therefore asking you to support the partnership at a time when it is most needed with a return to this level of investment.

Through the “reboot” of your contribution, we can help reshape and deliver our priorities with a clear spotlight on local activity, translated into county wide, sub regional and a national approach to promoting our offer to the British public. Amplifying local activity generating visitors both from within, but critically external to our borders. Whilst I appreciate the timing is difficult, the funding to recommence this year is crucial in being able to take advantage of forthcoming opportunities to promote our destination.

This increased investment will enable the DMP to continue whilst the private sector is not able to meet its funding obligations (£90K) in the short term. It will enhance our capacity to support the sector, build on the activities of the partnership and increase the marketing of our destination.

Of further note, through targeted activity the DMP is inviting new businesses to join the partnership at zero or reduced cost for the 2021 season, we are also working to grow the critical mass of the partnership and with it, the value and volume of tourism in Staffordshire.

The DMP are keen to make sure that we get the most value out of our investment, if you are in agreement, we would also be most grateful for your nomination of a key contact officer who will be able to work with us as part of a stakeholder working group which will shape, steer and deliver against our enhanced activity as we progress further, not least amplifying and integrating local level activity. Please return your nominations to Andrea Sammons (email – andrea.sammons@staffordshire.gov.uk) at your earliest opportunity.

Thank you in advance for your contribution.



Councillor Philip White

Chair of the Destination Staffordshire Board

Co-signed by the following Members of the Destination Staffordshire Board

- *Francis Jackson, General Manager, Alton Towers Resort*
- *Clare Furnell-King, General Manager, Double Tree by Hilton Stoke-on-Trent*
- *Philippa Rawlinson, Managing Director, The National Memorial Arboretum*
- *Hayley Mival, The National Trust – Shugborough Estate*
- *Julie Arnold on behalf of Staffordshire Waterways Group*
- *Simon Warburton, Executive Director, Lichfield Cathedral*
- *Paul Williams, Tourism Consultant and Chair of Stoke-on-Trent Cultural Destinations*



27th July 2021

Cllr Philip White
Chair – Destination Staffordshire Board
Destination Staffordshire
2 Staffordshire Place
Tipping Street
Stafford
ST16 2DH

Dear Philip,

Re: Contribution to Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership

Thank you for your letter dated 17th June 2021. In your letter you set out a request for Cannock Chase Council to increase its contribution to the Destination Staffordshire Partnership from £3,000 per annum to £15,000. This is in recognition of the fact that the private sector is not able to fulfil its funding obligations in the short term.

It is exciting to hear that there are plans to re-boot the Partnership to take advantage of the opportunities to promote the county as a tourism destination and to encourage more people to come and visit some of the wonderful attractions that are on offer.

The visitor economy is already an important sector for Cannock Chase and the Council is keen to develop a distinctive and attractive identity for the District, capitalising on its environmental assets and recognising that the new McArthurGlen Designer Outlet is significantly enhancing the District's profile and reputation. We have a massive opportunity to maximise the expected 3 million visits per year to the Designer Outlet along with additional visitors for the 2022 Commonwealth Games Mountain Biking event and the global publicity that this will generate.

There is clearly strong synergy between our ambitions and the vision of the Destination Staffordshire Partnership, and the Council is very keen to make the most of its involvement in the Partnership. Whilst you will appreciate that the Council's financial position is challenging and it is difficult to make a long term financial commitment, I am able to confirm that we are in a position to increase our contribution to £15,000 for the 2021/22 financial year.

In return I would expect that the Council is provided with regular performance information to ensure that it can assess performance and impact and naturally I would expect members and officers to be fully involved in taking the Partnership forward.

In terms of our contribution for 2022/23 and 2023/24, I am not at this stage able to confirm whether the Council can commit to an increased contribution. This will need to be subject to a Cabinet report and decision, likely to be in September. To assist with this process, I would appreciate further information on the benefits of increasing our investment to support the overall business case that will be presented to Cabinet. Please can this information be sent to Dean Piper, Head of Economic Prosperity deanpiper@cannockchasedc.gov.uk as soon as possible.

I would like to invite you to come and meet with myself, the Portfolio Leader for District Development, and senior officers to discuss how we can build our relationship. I will ask our PA team to contact your secretary to arrange a mutually convenient time.

I look forward to working with you to develop and grow our visitor economy and make the most of the exciting opportunities coming our way over the next few years.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "O. Lyons". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'S'.

Cllr Olivia Lyons
Leader, Cannock Chase Council

Copy to:

Cllr Mike Sutherland, Portfolio Leader for District Development
Tim Clegg – Chief Executive
Bob Kean – Interim Managing Director
Dean Piper – Head of Economic Prosperity

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Our Ref: AH/DMP

Contact:

Tel: 01785 276261

Email: andrea.sammons@staffordshire.gov.uk

Date: 3rd August 2021

Destination Staffordshire
Staffordshire County Council
2 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street,
Stafford, Staffordshire ST16 2DH

By e mail to all Directors of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Authorities

Dear Colleagues

Re: Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership – Enhanced Offering

You will recall that in late June 2021, the Chair of the Destination Management Partnership (Councillor Philip White) wrote to Leaders of all District and Borough Councils and City of Stoke-on-Trent Council.

Following on from that letter, a meeting of the Staffordshire Economic Growth District Directors on 2nd July and the DMP Board meeting on 26th July it was agreed to prepare a brief note setting out some of the proposed enhancements and their potential benefits both in providing a collective Staffordshire identity and setting out a compelling locally distinctive offer.

In essence rebooting the DMP with full contributions from Boroughs, Districts and the City Council, equating to £15k each will help us to promote Staffordshire together, mutually benefitting from increased volume and value of tourism activity and I am most grateful for those partners who have been able to confirm their contributions so far.

Given the nature of the proposed investment it is difficult to accurately predict a set of 'key performance indicators' against which progress or success could be managed. It is also important to realise it will take some time for us to be able to quantify the impact of the benefits of investment decisions that we are making now.

By developing our enhanced approach to two tier working, we will give you the opportunity to shape and set the parameters and measures of success in a manner that best reflects your local priorities.

We are sure you will appreciate that the key initial focus should therefore be seen as one of enhanced collaboration and joint working to repay and maximise investment and ultimately generating further market penetration for our visitor economy and its businesses.

Our proposals were based around 4 key themes and 2 enablers, and we set out below how there are being progressed along with future planned activity from the proposed increased levels of investment.

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Destination Staffordshire is a public and private sector organisation formed to develop, manage, and promote Staffordshire's visitor economy

Staffordshire County Council has already earmarked an additional investment of £200,000 into these activities and of course, the success and future development and growth of these activities will be dependent on our collective investment and efforts to promote Staffordshire as a great place to live, visit and enjoy.

Key themes:

☐ **Targeted marketing and campaigns** to maximise Staffordshire's profile, and the respective contributor City/District and Boroughs, to attract more visitors.

a. The launch of the 'feel free' campaign as endorsed through the DMP Board meeting in March 2021. Circa £150,000 marketing budget for enhanced destination marketing through to Spring 2022. Greater integration and input with local campaigns.

b. Initial Social Media Digital Spring campaign led to 13 million impressions, 400,000 views and 2.79% click through rate (above travel industry averages). There may be an opportunity to provide further break down and analysis to understand key areas of activity.

c. Development of the Staffordshire Destination Video (which can be tailored to seasonal activities and has longevity beyond the current season) and associated paid for advertising, including Sky AdSmart TV through to Spring 2022.

d. Through digital platforms alone, the Summer campaign has an estimated reach of 48 million impressions.

e. Opportunity to use the 'Feel Free' campaign material and associated photography and videography for tailored and locally distinctive marketing.

f. Tailored web content for the specific 'destination' pages on the Enjoy Staffordshire website, allowing for locally preferred marketing messages and links to locally specified websites and social media platforms.

☐ **Overseeing and commissioning research and intelligence** to inform the activities of the visitor economy sector and to shape our offer and future priorities.

a. Commissioning of a new DMP visitor economy strategy. Contributing partners will be able to influence with the specification for tender, procurement exercise and appointment of consultants. Contributing partners and businesses will have a key role in inputting to the strategy.

b. Contributing partners to collectively agree the research programme and what is required now and over the next 3 years that would benefit all partners. What, where, when, who?

- c. Economic impact of tourism research at local authority level and county wide level to be provided for contributing partners. The value of the Staffordshire visitor economy in 2019 was valued at £1.87 billion with 28 million visitors and 32,000 jobs in the wider sector. Working in collaboration we will look to commission the most effective research to understand how the volume and value of our visitor economy is performing.
- **Lobbying and advocacy work** to influence key policy makers to shape the direction of the sector and maximise Staffordshire's role and profile.
 - a. The appointment of a Visitor Economy Partnership Development Manager to act as an advocate for the sector and establish future revenue opportunities
 - b. As identified above, the future direction of the Staffordshire visitor economy will be shaped by the visitor economy strategy and the collaborative approach to its production.
 - c. Using appropriate formal and informal relationships and networks to push the Staffordshire message , embracing those local authority partners that participate, and reiterating local distinctiveness.
- **Business support activities and signposting** to help the visitor economy renew and transform following on from the Covid 19 pandemic.
 - a. Targeted Business to Business Membership campaign running during Spring 2021 to promote new membership
 - b. Encouraging all district / borough / city tourism businesses to take advantage of the current free membership opportunity and basic listing on the Enjoy Staffordshire website. Partner funding has and will enable this so that the associated businesses can benefit directly from the resources and support available.
 - c. Relaunch of the Staffordshire Tourism & Good Food Awards to recognise and reward excellent businesses in the tourism, hospitality and leisure sector and provide a mechanism for them to compete on the national stage.

Enablers:

- **Enhanced two tier working between District and Borough Councils, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council**, creating greater connectivity between Staffordshire wide and local issues and delivery mechanisms.

- a. we have asked for nominations from partners to join our Stakeholder Working Group which will provide the key officer level direction to shape and truly deliver on the above proposals.
 - b. The Assistant Director for Business and Enterprise will lead on the Stakeholder Working Group until the appointment of the Visitor Economy Partnership Development Manager.
 - c. There are likely to be significant opportunities for economies of scale through joint procurement and other joint working targeted towards the needs of the sector.
- **Utilising the Staffordshire story and place brand resources**, Enjoy Staffordshire assets and established channels to promote and grow the Staffordshire visitor economy and bringing the story to life through compelling examples.
 - a. The successful launch and development of the Staffordshire Story and associated resources is already raising profile and creating substantial new opportunities including through the Ambassadors network. Working through the Stakeholder group, there is an opportunity to engage, shape and benefit from the Staffordshire story for respective localities.

I do hope that the above provides you with an indication of the key priorities that we are proposing to launch. I would however like to make one final plea. We do understand the pressures and challenges we all face to deliver our respectively demanding and yet always rewarding key priorities. If we are truly to maximise the benefit of the tourism, hospitality, and leisure sectors to our respective areas, we do need engagement from key officers. We cannot simply operate a “pay and the DMP will deliver” approach. You know your areas and programmes in detail, and we need to capture that and represent it at a DMP level. Collaboration, partnership, and communication is a key component of this reboot to help us maximise the benefits from this investment.

We very much hope and look forward to your organisation joining us in this exciting journey to really kick start the Staffordshire visitor economy.

Yours sincerely



Anthony Hodge
Assistant Director for Business and Enterprise, Staffordshire County Council