



Report to Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date 17 April 2024
Key Decision No
Public/Private Public

Portfolio
Directorate Thriving Place and Investment
Lead Officer Darren Crossley / Jane Meek

Title **Tourism report for Place Scrutiny Committee**

Summary: This report is to give an overview of the activity the council is engaged with to support tourism. To give members an understanding of the resources and tools that the council has to support tourism. To give information about opportunities, challenges and risks in developing tourism in Cumberland.

Recommendations: It is recommended that members consider the contents of the report and give any feedback or suggestions to officers in the Destination Management Team.

Tracking

Executive:	N/A
Scrutiny:	Date
Council:	N/A

1. Background

The Destination Management Team at Cumberland Council is a resourced combined from the former Allerdale Borough Council, Carlisle City Council and Copeland Borough Council. The team sits within Thriving Place and Investment and consists of:

- Destination Manager (former Carlisle City Council)
- Tourist Information Centre Team (former Carlisle City Council)
- Tourism and Culture Development Officer (former Copeland Borough Council)
- Tourism Specialist (former Allerdale Borough Council)

Prior to the creation of Cumberland Council, the former districts worked in partnership on a wide range of projects (e.g. Cumbria Residents Week, Strategic Visitor Management Group).

Carlisle Tourist Information Centre provides services including visitor information for the Cumberland area and beyond, content management of web sites and social media platforms, services for residents including event ticket sales, permits and licences and event support. The Tourist Information Centre is also home to the Assembly Room which is used by community groups.

Financial resource for the team and its functions comes from former Carlisle City Council and Allerdale Borough Council core budgets. Copeland tourism functions are externally funded through Sellafeld Ltd Social Impact Fund.

In 2023 tourism in Cumberland contributed £1593million to the economy with 17.93million visitors supporting 17072FTE people in employment.

2. Destination Promotion

- 2.1. The Destination Management Team is responsible for tourism and place promotion. This includes the production of promotional materials, marketing campaigns, trade and public shows and competitions (e.g. Perfect Days Out in Cumberland), public relations and social media activity.
- 2.2. Travel trade promotion is supported through activity including attendance at trade shows (British Tourism and Travel Show and Group Travel and Leisure Show) and through the work with England's Historic Cities. Seasonal campaigns include publications such as Coach Tours UK and Group Travel and Leisure magazines.

- 2.3. The Destination Management team supports wider place promotion including the UK Real Estate and Infrastructure Forum and various business expo and Ambassador events.

3. Sector Development

- 3.1. The Destination Management Team engage with businesses operating within the visitor economy and its supply chain. The team provides business support and networks such as Carlisle Ambassadors, Western Lake District and Coast Partnership as well as holding Tourism Breakfast Briefings.
- 3.2. Welcome Host training for tourism businesses is provided through the Tourist Information Centre and is open to all businesses operating within the visitor economy.
- 3.3. The team supports new product development including attractions such as The Edge in Whitehaven, Project Tullie, Weapons Hall at Muncaster Castle, Changing Places at Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway.

4. Strategic Visitor Management (SVMG)

- 4.1. The Destination Management Team provides resource for the land ranger patrols and Safer Lakes Team.
- 4.2. SVMG functions include monitoring visitor activity, promoting 'Adventure Smart' messaging and making sure that our communities are comfortable with the level of tourism in the area.
- 4.3. Ranger patrol carry out such duties as clearing camp fires and reporting/escalating issues with responsible agencies such as illegal off road parking and other challenges.
- 4.4. SVMG supports the provision of a walkers shuttle bus service to alleviate parking pressure in particular around Wasdale and Buttermere.
- 4.5. 'Adventure Smart' provides a toolkit for businesses to promote the key messages 'do I have the knowledge and skills for the day?', 'Do I know what the weather will be like?' and 'do I have the right gear?'.

5. Destination and place making events programme

- 5.1. The Destination Management Team has oversight of signature / place making events including Light District, Taste Cumbria, Carlisle Christmas Market, Solway Cycling Festival and Cumbria Residents Week. These are all used as anchors for destination marketing and are designed to support the Cumbria Destination Management Plan.
- 5.2. In 2024 Light District Carlisle had an economic impact of £200,000 with 4500 tickets sold. In 2022 Carlisle Christmas Market had an economic impact of £3.8million with 91,000 visitors. In 2022 Taste Cumbria Cockermouth had an economic impact of £1.9million with 25000 visitors. In 2023 the Solway Cycle Festival in Silloth had an economic impact of £47500 with 900 visitors.

6. England's Historic Cities

- 6.1. Carlisle is part of the England's Historic Cities consortium. England's Heritage Cities is a partnership of destinations brought together by common product and interests. Its purpose is to exchange knowledge, find solutions to shared challenges, benchmark performance, raise the profile of England's heritage product and facilitate joint activity, all with the intention of maximising the potential of the cities' visitor economies.
- 6.2. Its geographical footprint spans the length and breadth of England and membership comprises 13 of the country's premiere heritage locations: Bath, Canterbury, Cambridge, Chester, Carlisle, Durham, Greenwich, Lancaster, Lincoln, Oxford, Salisbury, Stratford and York.
- 6.3. The consortium works closely with a set of strategic partners including UK Inbound, T-stats and VisitBritain. In recent years the group has developed projects and delivered them with investment secured from the UK GREAT Challenge Fund and the Discover England Fund. These projects have enabled the group to forge new relationships with London and Partners, English Heritage and the Historic Houses Association.

7. Cumberland Story

- 7.1. The Destination Management Team have facilitated the development of a new place narrative for Cumberland. Working with stakeholders both within and outside of Cumberland, the Cumberland Story will provide a clear compelling story that sums up key elements of places and people in Cumberland. The narrative will reference location, culture, history, future aspirations and community. It will focus on positive future direction while acknowledging any challenges and provide a toolkit and image library for future place promotion.

8. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

- 8.1. A new Food and Drink project is being delivered under UKSPF to promote the hospitality industry in Cumberland and to provide business support and training linked to celebrity service, media training for chefs and sustainability. This supports the creation of a new food and drink guide. The marketing campaign will be called 'where food is always an event'.
- 8.2. The creation of destination themed itineraries Cumberland to enable attract and disperse within the county, deliver the actions of the Destination Management Plan and attract interest from the travel trade, consumer markets and encourage media visits.

9. Capital projects

- 9.1. The Destination Management Team are delivering the Town Deal Lighting Up Carlisle project and the lighting of Workington Hall which is part of the Levelling Up Fund Workington Gateway project.

10. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

10.1. The details of this report are designed to give members of the Scrutiny Committee a snapshot into the work that is being undertaken by the Destination Management Team in response to the new Destination Management Plan for Cumbria, and to ensure that all communities benefit from tourism and that our landscapes and places are protected and managed. A priority for the team is to promote Cumberland as the ideal place to live, work and visit.

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Appendices attached to report:

- None

Background papers:

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None