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To: Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Overview
and Scrutiny Committee, 18th January 2011

Subject: Tourism and Progress of the Kent Contemporary
Campaign

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To provide an overview of activity to promote the visitor
economy in Kent and in particular a progress report on the
Kent Contemporary and related MyKent campaigns
launched in summer 2010.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The visitor economy has been a recognised key sector for some time currently welcoming annually more than 45 million visitors contributing £2.5 billion to the wider Kent economy which in turn supports more than 3,000 SME's and over 50,000 jobs.
- 1.2 Visit Kent was formed (initially as Kent Tourism Alliance) as a not for profit public/private sector partnership to take responsibility for boosting the Kent and Medway area as visitor destinations and growing tourism businesses backed up by research, development and training provided by KCC's tourism team. All of this activity has been promoted to the industry under the single 'Visit Kent' umbrella for some time. This year sees the original two elements (KCC team and Visit Kent Ltd.) drawn together under a single business plan and all activity will now be reported and monitored by the Visit Kent Board where KCC holds two seats.

KCC investment into the whole Visit Kent operation for 2010/11 is £636,627 which includes £164k core funding into Visit Kent Ltd (Service Level Agreement), £275k from original T2010 targets funding and £197,627 for core (KCC) staff costs. In 2010/11 this leveraged £1,315,702 from other sources, including EU Interreg - £746k, other public sector - £98,200, private sector - £324,502 and other sources - £147,000, plus around £500k of "in kind" support from the industry. Similar levels of leverage are forecast going forward. This provides a total turnover for whole operation of almost £2.5m (including in kind support) with KCC's contribution being around 25%. In addition there has been a one off investment of £400k this year into the Kent Contemporary campaign which is explained further below.

2. Future Activity

“Tourism presents a huge economic opportunity. Not just bringing business to Britain but right across Britain, driving new growth in the regions and helping to deliver the rebalancing of our national economy that is so desperately needed.” Prime Minister David Cameron, August 2010.

- 2.1 With the sector forecast nationally to be contributing 4.1% of UK GDP by 2020, making it one of the best performing sectors with above 3.5% in GVA terms¹, those working to promote and support the visitor economy need to constantly evolve to remain responsive to local, national and international influences and alive to new opportunities as and when they present themselves. Kent is benefiting from major infrastructure improvements including Southeastern’s HS1 service and a growing number of routes from Manston, Kent’s International Airport. 2011 will be a key year with high profile cultural and sporting events including the opening of Turner Contemporary in Margate, Folkestone Triennial and the Open Golf at Sandwich. The London Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, then present a huge opportunity to showcase Kent.
- 2.2 With a public / private sector board, 80 business investors, current EU funding in excess of £3m secured and 350 members, Visit Kent has a wide range of initiatives and campaigns aimed specifically at growing Kent’s share of the UK visitor economy market. These include Greet the World (in readiness for the Olympics), Coastal Kent, Cruise Connection partnerships, Quality Assurance scheme, Pride Awards, Celebrating Kent campaign, B2B website, newsletters and Business Barometer, ‘2 for 1’ attraction tickets for rail travellers, the Kent Greeters programme (being the first outside of New York City), the Big Day Out and a range of bespoke activity aligned to one-off or annual events such as Kent 2020 and KEiBA business awards. Visit Kent’s new business plan continues to adapt and expand this programme of work and Sandra Matthews-Marsh, Chief Executive Visit Kent, will present more detail at the meeting and focus in particular on the Kent Contemporary Campaign and the associated MyKent initiative.

3. Kent Contemporary and MyKent

- 3.1 Having already embarked upon its own review of the Kent visitor destination brand in consultation with investors, partners and industry experts Visit Kent was invited by KCC to develop a new approach to marketing Kent to visitors that would help change traditional perceptions and, over time, increase our share of the UK visitor market. Following a rigorous tender process with support from Board Members and wider industry experts Visit Kent selected M&C Saatchi to deliver the creative elements of the ‘Kent Contemporary’ Campaign aimed primarily at the London market at a cost of £400k. This campaign was launched over the Summer with a high profile poster campaign and will continue into future years through a variety of mediums with additional funding and support garnered through Visit Kent’s relationship with its investors, partners and industry.

¹ Deloitte (UK and Nations 2010)

- 3.2 As a complimentary activity to Kent Contemporary, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Economic Development asked Visit Kent develop an innovative user-generated web-site specifically aimed at residents, providers and visitors sharing their 'discoveries' and experiences of Kent as a further guide for potential visitors. This concept is also being developed further through specific initiatives with and through the local media where the overall ambition is to capitalise on local pride as a powerful mechanism for 'selling' Kent as a visitor destination of choice into the future. The initiative has been expanded to embrace social networking tools including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to extend its reach both geographically and in terms of visitor profile.
- 3.3 For both campaigns it was an absolute condition that Kent residents and Kent business people were featured. Early provisional, results from the post-campaign research conducted on Visit Kent's behalf by Tourism South East are now being collated. These indicate that the campaigns have generated over 93,000 additional overnight stays in the county resulting in a trip expenditure of over £12.4 million. Whilst there is still more analysis to do on day visits we are advised that the return on investment for the campaign has already reached 30:1. More details will be covered in the presentation.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Members are asked to:

Note the background and progress so far since the launch last summer of the Kent Contemporary campaign and associated MyKent initiative; and

Consider if they wish reports on progress to be brought to the Committee in future years along with the formal outcome of the analysis of impact of the campaigns.

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Background Documents:

None