



Our Ref: AH/DMP

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Destination Staffordshire
Staffordshire County Council
2 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street,
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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.

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