

Meeting:	Environment and Economy Sub-Committee
Date:	29 November 2005
Subject:	Tourism Review – Progress Report
Responsible Officer:	Director of People, Policy and Performance
Contact Officer:	Ed Hammond (x5205)
Portfolio Holder:	Environment and Transport Education and Lifelong Learning
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

That Members note the progress of the Tourism Review.

Reason for report

At their meeting on 10 October, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed a recommendation on the item “Principles of Scrutiny” that regular progress reports on reviews be formally submitted to sub-committees as a standing item.

Benefits

It is critical to maintain careful oversight and management of all review project plans. This report will potentially improve communication not only within the council (both officer and political groups) but will also keep residents informed

and potentially engaged. Consideration of this report will mean that the review's work so far can be examined and challenged against the scope agreed at the meeting on 26 September.

Cost of Proposals

There are no costs associated with this progress report.

A breakdown of the costs incurred so far on the review is provided at paragraph 2.13.

Risks

If the sub-committee does not note this report:

- (1) The sub-committee would not be fully exercising its responsibilities in overseeing the review.
- (2) The review would not benefit from the external challenge which discussion of this report will provide.

Implications if recommendations rejected

The "Principles of Scrutiny", agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, would be undermined

The review would not be able to progress effectively.

Section 2: Report

Brief History

- 2.1 At its meeting on 10 March 2005 the Environment and Economy Sub-Committee considered its work programme for the coming year and agreed to conduct a review into tourism.
- 2.2 The scope of the review was agreed by the Sub-Committee at the last meeting on 26 September. It is attached.
- 2.3 This review is being carried out concurrently with the review into Public Green Spaces in the light of the time constraints imposed because of the local council elections in May 2006.
- 2.4 This report reflects the situation on 15 November. An oral update on events from 15 November to 29 November will be provided at the meeting.

Gathering of Evidence

- 2.5 The group has already carried out a number of the actions listed in the scope, although the evidentiary session on 30 November will probably yield a large proportion of the information which will be used to formulate recommendations. .
- 2.6 The scope outlined three key themes – sustainability, infrastructure and community involvement.
- 2.7 **Best practice** – the group visited Birmingham’s marketing organisation (Marketing Birmingham) and were able to collect a significant amount of best practice evidence relating to marketing, economic development, transportation, community involvement and general improvements to infrastructure. Evidence is also currently being sought from other outer London boroughs including Bromley and Bexley.
- 2.8 **Sustainability** – a limited amount of evidence has been received, other than that obtained through research for the literature review and through the best practice work undertaken. It is expected that more detailed information will be forthcoming at the evidentiary meeting on 30 November.
- 2.9 **Infrastructure** – the bulk of the work on infrastructure is planned for the evidentiary hearing on 30 November.
- 2.10 **Community involvement** – a residents’ questionnaire (distributed in late October) and a set of focus groups (carried out in late November) have aimed to ascertain residents’ perceptions of tourism, and their opinions of how tourism might benefit Harrow, and how they might be involved in this process. These exercises replace the planned public meeting, which had originally been agreed as part of the scope. This is because it was thought that such a meeting would probably not be well-attended given the risk that many residents would not feel that tourism was relevant to them. Focus groups were considered to be a more targeted way of ensuring public involvement.
- 2.11 **Evidentiary hearing** – this form of receiving evidence is being piloted as part of this review. As a subject, tourism is particularly suited to this sort of evidence gathering, given that many of its central issues cut across the interests of a range of stakeholders. Preparations have been detailed and comprehensive and care has been taken to ensure that expert witnesses attending are aware of the questions the group intend to ask, and to ensure that members are fully apprised of the relevant policy and operational information well in advance of the meeting.

Budget

- 2.12 Members made enquiries about budgeting and resources at the last meeting. A breakdown of expenses incurred so far is shown below. This is being financed from the existing scrutiny review budget.
- 2.13 The expenses listed below do not include money expended as a result of normal working practices, ie officer time.

Room bookings & refreshments	£100
Train tickets (for visit to Birmingham)*	£523
Survey design	£200
Survey printing	£250
Resident survey design**	£150
Resident survey printing	£150
TOTAL	£1,373

**It was not possible to book tickets in advance, given the tight timescale for gathering evidence.*

Thus, open return tickets had to be purchased

***A contribution was made to the design and printing of a survey of local residents on the subject of tourism, which was being carried out by the Tourism Officer, because the results were highly relevant to the review. The results of the survey will be used in the final report as evidence.*

Project diagram

- 2.14 A project plan, in the form of a Gantt chart, is attached to illustrate the progression of the main strands of the review.
- 2.15 This chart illustrates how far key stages of the review have progressed. Time is shown along the lower axis (the chart is divided into weeks). Each separate task is divided into a distinct block.
- 2.16 Currently the work is being carried out according to timetable.

Options considered

Not applicable to this report.

Consultation

Not applicable to this report.

Financial Implications

Costs associated with the delivery of the work programme will be met from within existing resources.

Legal Implications

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 requires any council plans or programmes to provide a Strategic Environmental Assessment. This will impact upon any proposals for infrastructure development and will be considered as part of the review process.

Equalities Impact

None relevant to this update.

Section 17, Crime and Disorder Act implications

None relevant to this update.

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

Scope and detailed project plan is attached at Appendix 1.

Project plan listing tasks completed to date is attached at Appendix 2.