

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION AND LEISURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u>
REPORT SUBJECT:	<u>TOURISM ACTION FRAMEWORK</u>
REPORT AUTHOR:	<u>A. TIPPINGS</u>
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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to update Scrutiny members on the current position of the tourism strategy and action plan framework.

2. BACKGROUND

Tourism currently lies in the Education and Leisure Directorate. The primary role of the service is to oversee the development and promotion of tourism product through the delivery of an action plan framework, detailed in appendix (1).

The last Blaenau Gwent tourism strategy covered the period from 2004-2009. There has been a lapse of some time since the previous tourism strategy, therefore, it dedicated a substantial amount of effort assessing the existing tourism product and opportunities for development and marketing. The original strategy included an 18 point action plan.

3. PRESENT POSITION

All 18 action points have now been delivered with some notable successes. Importantly, the volume and value of tourism to the local economy is now evaluated annually. At the start of the last strategy tourism was worth £24.5m (£26.6m when adjusted for inflation) to the local economy. Blaenau Gwent had 486,000 visitors, spending 658,000 days in the area. Tourism then supported the full time equivalent of 489 jobs.

By the end of the strategy there was an actual 21.2% rise in the value of tourism to £29.7m, which equates to 11.7% when inflation is taken into

account. This figure reached a peak at £30.1m but the effects of the recession drove it down slightly by the end of 2009. 563,000 tourists now spend 740,000 days here a rise of 16% and tourism now supports the full time equivalent of 535 jobs.

Tourism is now recognised as an important element of the local economy and features heavily in the current Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Strategy.

The location, infrastructure and vision of the authority has secured many major events. Blaenau Gwent was the home of the 2010 National Eisteddfod of Wales, which has been hailed as a great success. Parc Bryn Bach has been the host venue for the Welsh leg of the UK Triathlon, giving global media coverage and the site has received accolades for being an exemplary location for triathlons.

Tourism funding has secured numerous key developments for Blaenau Gwent. It has delivered many aspects of the Vision for Parc Bryn Bach through the development of cycling facilities, golf course and driving range, upgrades to the play area, countryside centre and caravan and camp site. Works to restore and transform Bedwellty House and Park are nearing completion and the exciting project to develop the General Offices into a state of the art genealogy centre is well underway.

There has been a substantial growth in graded accommodation now promoted through our own website, (the Valleys, Visit Wales and Visit Britain) along with a doubling in the development and promotion of visitor attractions and walking routes. This along with the new destination management system for the Valleys, has truly put Blaenau Gwent on the map. It should be recognised that all this has been achieved with little or no budget.

It is evident that there has been a great deal of progress since the last Tourism Strategy, however, it now important that we concentrate on maximising future progress and development opportunities.

4. PROPOSAL

It is felt that at present there is no requirement for the in depth strategy as in 2004. We need a framework for action that is sufficiently flexible to deliver what is best for Blaenau Gwent in response to funding opportunities. The proposed tourism action plan framework delivers through a series of SMART objectives.

It is proposed that Scrutiny Committee notes the success of the Tourism Strategy 2004-9 and approves the tourism action plan framework 2010

as the delivery mechanism for tourism development for the next 5 years.

5. STATEMENT ON FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At present there are no financial implications in relation to this report.

6. STATEMENT ON STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

At present there are no staffing implications in relation to this report.

7. STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS

HUMAN RESOURCES	CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER / MONITORING OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES / S.151	OTHER
			DMT/CMT

8. STATEMENT THAT CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO:

All the relevant legislation and policies have been consulted and adhered to in relation to this report.

9. CONCLUSION

The tourism action plan framework 2010 gives a clear, focussed direction for tourism development in Blaenau Gwent for the next 5 years. It will contribute to the economic, cultural and community prosperity of the area and will help to enhance the perception of Blaenau Gwent as a visitor destination.

10. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Scrutiny notes the success of the Tourism Strategy 2004-9, formally approves the tourism action plan framework 2010 as the delivery mechanism for tourism development for the next 5 years and monitors it accordingly.

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LEISURE SERVICES

[Appendix 1](#)