

Outline: Littleford Metropolitan Borough expenditure on tourism

Message

The council should not increase expenditure on tourism until the impact of such expenditure is demonstrated clearly.

Introduction

[Situation:] Tourism has increased in Littleford in recent years. Domestic and overseas visitors spend in Littleford has increased from £8.6bn in 2002 to £9.1bn in 2004.

[Problem:] It is difficult to identify the extent to which expenditure on tourism has contributed to the increased tourism in Littleford.

[Question:] The Tourism Committee wants to be able to identify what is being spent on tourism by the council and the impact of this expenditure.

[Response:] The council should publish details of expenditure on tourism and how its impact is measured.

1. Expenditure on tourism should be more transparently presented.

1.1 The expenditure on tourism is not clearly coordinated.

1.2 The relevant authorities do not share a common definition of tourism.

Recommendation

That the Council Leader uses his Tourism Strategy and/or the associated three-year tourism action plans produced by the local development authority to set out what the council will spend on tourism, what this will pay for and how this expenditure is funded.

2. The impact of expenditure on levels of tourism in the area should be measured.

2.1 Stakeholders have advised of doubts about the value for money of some council expenditure on tourism.

2.2 Recent projects have demonstrated the need for clear measurement of the impact of expenditure on tourism.

2.2.1 The Littleford TV project has not realised its income targets.

2.2.2 Promotional events can be bad investment because people only visit for one day, overload Littleford's infrastructure and provide no lasting economic value.

2.3 There are limitations to using Return on Investment and press

coverage as measures of impact.

Recommendations

That the Littleford Tourism Office does not invest more public money in Littleford TV until it can be demonstrated to represent value for money.

That the Council Leader explains in the local development authority's three-year tourism action plans how the impact of council expenditure on tourism will be measured.

That the local development authority's annual report on the 'measures of success' of the tourism action plan includes details of actual council expenditure on tourism, the impact of this expenditure and the lessons to be learnt about future spending.

3. Stakeholders should be more involved in decisions about expenditure on tourism.

- 3.1 The council does not disseminate the results of its work in measuring tourist activities against performance indicators.
- 3.2 Stakeholders have advised that they are unaware of council expenditure on tourism and how the impact of this is measured: for example, how Return on Investment is calculated.

Recommendation

That the local development authority presents its annual report on the 'measures of success' of the tourism action plan to stakeholders at a formal event and invites them to contribute to the lessons to be learnt about future spending on tourism.

4. Follow up

The Tourism Committee will revisit its recommendations to check on progress in one year. This should coincide with the local development authority's publication of the annual report on the 'measures of success' of the tourism action plan.