



Tourism Economy Thematic Action Planning Team Workshop one Meeting Notes

DATE: Tuesday 6th November 2018 **TIME:** 2:00 pm **VENUE:** Market Place Theatre, Armagh

Attendees: Zoe Millar-Minouge – **Armagh City Hotel**, Jennie Dunlop, Michelle Markey, Sara McGeary – **ABC Council**, Carol Conlin – **Armagh Public Library**, Hilda Winter – **Dan Winter’s Cottage and Ancestral Home**, Evelyn Hanna – **Libraries NI**, Trevor Woods – **Mount Ida Pottery**, Derek Brown – **Social Enterprise**, Gerry Darcy and Gary Mawhinney - **Translink**

Apologies: Brian Johnston, Elaine Gillespie –**ABC Council**, Helen Troughton – **Armagh Cider Company**, Ciaran O’Kane –**Invest NI, Tourism NI.**, Anne Garvey – **Ulster GAA.**

1 & 2 Welcome and Getting to know each other

Jennie Dunlop, Community and Strategic Planning Manager within Council welcomed everyone to the second meeting for the Tourism Action Planning Team for Community Planning for the Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. She advised that the Tourism NI rep who chaired this team has left the organisation and Tourism NI are working on finding a replacement.

Sara McGeary, Tourism Officer for Council thanked everyone for coming and invited the team to introduce themselves and apologies were noted.

Jennie outlined the agenda for the session which provided an update on community planning within the borough and progress update on the Tourism Economy Action Plan.

3. Community Planning Update

Jennie provided a brief update on community planning in the borough. The Community plan for this area is named Connected, it is a long term plan that runs to 2030. Community planning is about improving wellbeing and ensuring communities are more involved in decision making. The Plan is built around nine long term outcomes and three cross cutting themes. Jennie stated that the nine long-term outcomes were being taken forward through six Thematic Action Planning Teams. Each action planning team is being chaired by a Statutory partner from one of the organisations listed in the legislation. The action planning teams were all progressing at different stages and to date there are 4 action plans developed. The Creative Place action planning process commenced in October and an action plan will be presented to the CPSP at the December meeting. The Enhanced and Revitalised Place will be starting early next year. Action planning across the teams has been similar with Tourism Economy taking a slightly different approach.

Jennie added that each of the plans won’t sit in isolation and whilst there are some plans still be developed, there are already clear links emerging across the plans.

In developing the Council’s Tourism Strategy there has already been extensive research and consultation therefore the Tourism Economy Action Plan will take some of the actions from the Tourism Strategy as a starting point for community planning.

4 Tourism Economy Action Plan – Progress Update

Sara presented the Tourism Economy Outcome and population indicator with the team.

Tourism Economy Long-term Outcome

- Our borough is the destination of choice for international* Visitors.

The following population indicator will be used to track our progress over time:

- Number of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland

Sara advised that the Tourism Economy Action Plan was approved by the Community Planning Strategic Partnership at the May 2018. Work has progressed and is ongoing; with the first progress report due to be presented to the December CPSP meeting.

Sara provided a progress update on the actions

1. Establish a baseline of tourism performance against which growth in the visitor economy can be measured

- Monthly Hotel occupancy survey – Commenced January 2018

Zoe explained that Armagh City Hotel found it beneficial getting the feedback.

- Monthly Visitor Attraction/Facility Survey – Commenced April 2018.

Sara remarked this was going well with approx. 1200 responses received over the 5-month timeframe. Sara added that council was keen to continue this survey with some minor amendments. She advised that those visitor attractions /facilities with returns over 50 would receive individual feedback.

Translink suggested that this survey was something they could accommodate as quite often a person's journey either starts or ends at the bus stations.

ACTION: Sara to follow up with Translink and Libraries NI about the possibility of the surveys being placed in their premises.

Secondary:

- Monitor annual tourism statistics from NISRA. Update business on headline through Tourism Hospitality Link ezine.

2. Embed new tourism brand for the Borough with trade partners

Sara explained this action looks at how this borough wants to be viewed on the world stage. The new brand is framed around "The First Place" and has been incorporated on all tourism literature. Sara advised work was ongoing to finalise the brand guidelines and trade assets for trade partners and this would be shared.

ACTION: Sara to follow up with Translink about the possibility of the branding being included on the timetables for the borough.

3. Increase overnight visitors to the Borough

This action had a strong link to the long-term outcome within the Community Plan.

3.1

Sara advised that an extensive sales programme was developed and was being rolled out. Council have employed an officer who has been undertaking trade missions and holding meetings with tour operators.

3.2

Sara added that a World Host Ambassador Programme are being rolled out in November 2018 and more are scheduled for January 2019.

3.3

The first "Destination Mee the Supplier" workshop took place in September 2018 with 29 local tourism and hospitality trade partners coming together for the first time.

Discussions ensued around the new council area and its diverse offering and the importance of the sector knowing what was available for visitors across the whole borough. Discussion arose about hosting a familiarisation bus tour across the borough for key staff who would be in daily contact with visitors to enable them to promote the whole borough.

ACTION: an action around familiarisation bus trips to be explored and added to the action plan.

4. Embed signature events as key part of destination development

Sara advised that the Tourism Department were hosting three annual signature events and all was on track.

- St Patrick's Festival
- Georgian Day
- Food and Drink Festival

It was noted that stakeholder support for these events was very important. Gerry, Translink added that Translink were providing a bus from the Portadown area to encourage as many visitors as possible.

5. Promote investment in new and existing tourism products

Sara advised that there was always continual investment required within the Tourism industry and providers needed to ready e.g. undertake feasibility studies to ensure they were able to avail of any future funding applications.

5 & 6 What's happening next and Close

Jennie advised that the first progress report due to be presented to the December CPSP meeting and progress will be reported every six months after that. She added that will follow up with Tourism NI in regards to Chair for this team.

The team agreed that a future meeting would be useful in February and that it would be useful to have a presentation of the survey results.

Sara closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their support and active participation in the meeting and advised community planning team would be in touch regarding dates for future meetings.

ACTION: Community Planning team to update Action Plan.

ACTION: ABC Council to take first progress report to the CPSP on 13th December 2018