

**CABINET BRIEFING
CABINET MEMBER LEISURE AND TOURISM
4th FEBRUARY 2010**

Creative Alternatives

Creative Alternatives, Sefton's arts-on-prescription scheme has just issued its annual report. Members will recall that the initial three-year scheme was funded through the Government's 'Invest To Save' programme and has been very successful in helping people with mental health issues by providing access to arts and cultural activities. So much so that it is now considered a national example of best practice and attracts visits from other providers around the country.

Although Government funding has now ceased, the Primary Care Trust are keen for it to continue and have agreed to meet some of its core costs with Arts & Cultural Services venues and staff playing a continuing role in delivering this valuable service through their existing programmes.

Sport and Recreation

Active Workforce: Continues to run successfully, with a new partner joining the programme in January. The Autism Initiatives Organisation has signed up to offer the programme to its staff. The Active Workforce programme has also been used by Local Government as a best practice case study in the field of health improvement.

Quest: Leisure's Sport and Recreation Development Team underwent their first Quest assessment and achieved 87% - the highest recorded Quest score on a first assessment. In the leisure centres, Bootle Leisure Centre and Netherton Activity Centre both achieved 79% and Litherland Sports Park achieved 85% in their Quest assessment. Quest is the leisure industry's quality award.

Leisure Centres: Dunes Splash World has successfully achieved the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Award from Enjoy England, the official tourist board for England and part of VisitBritain. The centre was also awarded Best Performer for a Sports and Leisure Facility at the recent APSE Awards, for the second year running. Meadows in Maghull continues to impact on the local community with more than 1,200 members now signed up to the fitness suite in less than three months. Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre is now progressing towards offering a range of activities for centre members with the appointment of a senior development and operations manager and sports development manager.

BAP Project

The Department's Coast and Countryside Service, Biodiversity and Access Project featured on BBC News Northwest on the 18th January. The feature showed the excellent work of the BAP in developing partnerships to encourage active involvement of hard to reach groups and disengaged young people in coast and countryside areas. It came about following a study that was carried out to consider the value of Objective 1 funding managed by the Mersey Forest. Members may be aware of the workshop partnership with New Directions at Ainsdale, where locally sourced timber is used to manufacture countryside furniture using equipment funded by Obj 1 through the Mersey Forest.

Marketing

PR – Total equivalent advertising value (EAV) secured via media contract is just over £1.1 million. This is the value of the editorial secured for the Classic Resort, events and retail campaigns.

Print – The new Conference Portfolio will be signed off w/c 25 January. The 2010 Southport Restaurateur Association's 'Eating Out Guide' will be sent to print w/c 25 January.

Golf – The next Golf sub group meeting will be held on 9 February. Planning is underway for a Scottish golf / sports media trip in April. Work has commenced, in conjunction with TMP, on promotion for the Ricoh Womens Open in July.

STBN – Next Alliance meeting on 3 March. Work to start shortly on preparing reports. Membership currently 108.

Website – The visitsouthport.com website will move to the new platform (Enterprise) in spring 2010. Initial design stage is currently underway.

Group Travel - Travel Trade Guide is to be signed off this week (w/c 19 January).

Conferences – Southport will exhibit at International Confex 2010 (23-25 February). Delegate passports are being reprinted and work is about to commence on the spring edition of Conference times.

Dispersal Officer

ICT - In process of moving www.visitsouthport.com and conference website to the Enterprise Platform, which will offer more flexibility, economies of scale and offer the customer a more engaging and user friendly experience. The new version of visitsouthport.com should be up and running by April. Also recently agreed the new technology plan with The Mersey Partnership to take further ICT developments forward in Southport (including Bluetooth boxes around the town, digital signage for conference delegates and mobile applications)

Southport Ambassador Awards - due to take place on Wednesday 3 March. Closing date Friday 22 January, with more than 450 nominations already received. Current Sponsors include TMP, Southport College, Merseytravel, Sefton@Work, Promoting Sefton, Southport Restaurateurs Association, Southport Partnership and Sefton MBC Tourism Department.

The Mersey Partnership Awards - TMP is once again organising the Annual Tourism Awards to recognise and reward excellence across the tourism sector. The event takes place on Thursday 10th June 2010 at the BT Convention Centre, Liverpool. Deadline for nominations is Monday 22nd February. Have organised a free workshop in Southport on Friday 29th January to offer Southport businesses assistance with completing application forms.

Events

British Musical Fireworks Championships draw for 2010 has taken place with all companies confirming participation – this includes 2 participants who failed to display in 2009 due to bad weather.

Programming for Southport Jazz Festival is now nearing completion with over 50 concerts and enhanced free activity on Lord Street.

Planning for Southport Food & Drink Festival has begun, including negotiations with Taste of the North West and Southport's Restaurateur Group regarding participation. A committee report is being presented at to Cabinet Member for Leisure & Tourism on 29th January.

Discussions are taking place with Formby Civic Society and the National Trust regarding potential activity to celebrate the 100 anniversary of flight from Formby Point.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport has once again agreed to become partners for the Southport Air Show. As a result, aircraft displaying at the event will be take off/land at LJLA and they will offer significant support in with marketing and PR activity.

VISITOR ECONOMY

Southport Visitor Economy Strategy is available in draft and being presented at various stakeholder groups including Southport Tourism Business Network, Southport Business Enterprise, Leisure and Tourism Committee & Southport Partnership. Draft implementation plans are now being developed.

Partners for Growth – Finalising project agreements, commissioning research activity to monitor the performance of the initiative and a range of tourism activity including research and new technology initiatives. The first expenditure claim was submitted to TMP in December.

BUSINESS TOURISM

Following the completion of the new business tourism business plan, and the buy-in by the Business Tourism Steering Group – the plan is now well-established is currently being delivered by the team. Targets for the new financial year have been proposed and are due to be approved at the next Steering Group Meeting on 20th January.

Overview of the year so far ..

2009/2010	Confirmed conferences	Provisional reservations	Dates Offered	Dates Released	Fam Visits taken place	Future Familiarisation Visits
Quarter 1 April - June 2009	6	4	1	6	13	6
Quarter 2 July – Sept 2009	6	2	5	2	13	9
Quarter 3 Oct – Dec 2009	9	16	1	6	11	9
Quarter 4 Jan – March 2010						
Total	21	22	7	14	37	24

Our new national PR agency, Davies Tanner have now familiarised themselves with the product and are currently setting up a press desk to handle our account. A member of their team is due to make a short presentation at the next Steering Group meeting, as it is imperative that we have the support of the venues in terms of 'feeding' Davies Tanner with leads etc.

Southport has hosted a number of extremely successful conferences during this period and feedback from both organisers and delegates has been excellent. A number of the organisations even re-booked to return before the end of their event!

Arvato have been conducting an appraisal of our town commissions system in order to establish better working practices. Their appraisal included research into best practice destinations around the country and the completed report is due in the next quarter.