

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Culture, Heritage and Libraries Policy and Resources	27 October 2014 6 November 2014
Subject: One Year On: A Review of the City's Visitor Strategy and Action Plan 2013/17	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Information

Summary

In October 2013, the City's Visitor Strategy 2013/17 was approved by your Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee and, the month following, by your Policy and Resources Committee. It was approved by the Court of Common Council in December of the same year.

This report, by way of Appendix 1, sets out progress to date after just under a year of the strategy being adopted. Using a RAG (Red, Amber, Green traffic light) reporting system which has been adapted to show whether an action has been started or superseded, is underway, or is nearing completion/complete (see key on page 2 of the appendix), all parts of the strategy's Action Plan are examined with highlights and impacts listed for each of the five sections under which the actions fall.

This is a good news story for the City, with growth of the value and volume of City visitors significantly exceeding London and national figures for 2013 and thus the strategy's own targets (many strategy actions were begun ahead of final committee approvals and this has had some notable impact on last year's figures).

Of the strategy's 59 actions, 85% have been started, with 59% being significantly advanced or completed. Of the 15% of actions that appear red, those not superseded by other developments will be addressed within the next year where it is possible to do so or carried over to a revised action plan due for publication in late 2015.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Receive the report for information

Main Report

Background

1. The Visitor Strategy 2013/17 sits alongside, and supports, the corporate Cultural and Communications Strategies, and reflects key priorities within our Local and Corporate Plans. It sets out the rationale for encouraging visitors to the Square Mile, identifies target groups and challenges, and defines a work plan for your Visitor Development team in CHL as well as other departments. Appendix 1 reports progress against the work plan at the end of year one.

Current Position

2. The story of the City's visitor economy in 2013 is a good one. Growth in both the value and volume of visitors far exceeds London and national figures, bringing significant benefit to City stakeholders across hospitality, retail, culture and tourism sectors, as well as enhancing the City's attractiveness as a place to be, for business, workers, residents and visitors.
3. This is, in some part, due to an inevitable rise in visitor numbers to London following Olympic displacement as well as the increased profile our Platinum Membership of London and Partners has given the City as a destination.
4. It is also due to the success of your officers in securing partnerships across the board, most notably with high profile arts and media exponents and through collective endeavour with City providers, with whom shared cost projects have delivered greater clout than local City budgets could have realised alone.
5. While there has been some significant focus on partnerships, a number of notable additions to our product portfolio have also helped to secure interest and drive visits. These include the opening of the Heritage Gallery, the delivery of the City Visitor Trail and another great year for Sculpture in the City.
6. Our involvement in London, national and international events and campaigns has also given us valuable exposure, most notably through the Tour de France, the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta and our recent agreements with VisitEngland which sees the City Information Centre being selected as London's official tourist information centre the Rugby World Cup.
7. Over the coming year, your Officers will build on these successes, striving to retain the City's position at the heart of London's visitor economy and playing a pivotal role in enhancing London's appeal as a destination on the worldwide stage.

Proposals

8. Members are asked to receive this report for information, noting that of the strategy's 59 actions, 85% have been started, with 59% being significantly advanced or completed.
9. The 15% of actions that still appear red (and so have not yet been executed) will be addressed within the next year where it is possible to do so, landscape and local risk budgets allowing.

10. It is proposed that a new Action Plan will be developed towards the end of 2015 to cover the period up to the end of the Strategy's life (2017) and that any outstanding actions that have not been superseded by other events are carried over at this time.
11. The new Action Plan will be presented to your Committee for consideration in late 2015 or early 2016.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

12. The Visitor Strategy complements the Cultural Strategy (currently under revision). It is referenced in the Corporate Plan and is particularly relevant to Key Policy Priority 5 (increasing the impact of the City's cultural and heritage offer on the life of London and the nation). It is also in harmony with the government's Tourism Policy (DCMS, 2011) and with the aims of other overarching bodies such as VisitEngland, London & Partners and the GLA.
13. The headline targets of the Visitor Strategy have been significantly exceeded for 2013, surpassing the growth of both London's and the national visitor economies. This is, in some part, due to a resurgence of visitors to central London following Olympic displacement, but can also be attributed to the high profile your officers have achieved for the City as a destination by working in partnership with City stakeholders and making best use of the opportunities afforded by our 3-year Platinum membership of London and Partners. The membership was made possible by a grant from your Policy and Resources Committee in 2013.

Conclusion

14. The City is pivotal to London's attractiveness as a place to work, live and play. It is at the heart of London's visitor offer and its importance as a driver for growth for the capital's visitor economy is demonstrated by the results of its performance against London and national averages over the past year.
15. Your Officers' focus on partnership working and on securing the City's position within London, national and international activities and campaigns has been the right one, delivering value for the City's stakeholders as well as for London as a whole.
16. This is no time for complacency. The good work that has been done provides a solid foundation on which to build and your Officers will, over the coming year, seek to do just that, retaining competitive advantage for the City and London by securing more partnerships and greater profile at a national and international level.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – City of London Visitor Strategy Action Plan: traffic light (RAG) reporting

Background Papers:

City of London Visitor Strategy – received and approved by Culture, Heritage and Libraries on 28 October 2013 and Policy and Resources on 21 November 2013

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