

Report to:

**TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Relevant Officer:

Philip Welsh, Head of Tourism and Communications

Date of Decision/ Meeting

30 March 2022

TOURISM PERFORMANCE UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide information on tourism performance including the final four months of 2021 and the opening two months of 2022. The report assesses the impact of the extended Illuminations season and enhanced Christmas offer, as well as providing an update on plans for the 2022 season.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the performance of tourism and associated services and to identify any further areas for scrutiny as appropriate.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure constructive and robust scrutiny of the report, which has been requested by the Committee.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"

6.0 Background information

6.1 During 2021, Blackpool Council unveiled a £1m package to kick-start the town's tourism economy after businesses suffered large-scale losses over the course of the pandemic as a result of lockdowns and trading restrictions. The main activities associated with this investment were a two-month extension of the Illuminations season and the biggest package of marketing and events ever delivered in the resort during November and December.

6.2 Attached at Appendix 7(a) is a detailed report which shows the impact of the Illuminations extension and the Christmas By The Sea village which was staged on the Tower Festival Headland from mid-November until the start of January. This impact is measured using Visitor Insight data which measures footfall via mobile phone technology.

6.3 The attached report also includes the plans to assist further resort recovery during 2022. These include:

- Large-scale investment in a destination marketing campaign for the summer of 2022 in partnership with Merlin and other resort partners;
- Another two-month extension to the Illuminations season, stretching to January 2, 2023;
- The return of key events including the two-day Air Show in August – the first time we have been able to stage this event since 2019 due to pandemic restrictions
- Working with the newly-established Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) to develop new events and support resort marketing activity
- Utilising the Welcome Back Fund to develop a new events guide and business tourism guide
- Ongoing business support via the Tourism Recovery Group which continues to meet on a weekly basis to discuss common issues such as staffing and recruitment, as well as sharing insights on performance and visitor numbers

6.4 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 7(a) – Report on Resort Recovery Plans

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 Appendix 7(a) outlines the use of a £1m package to assist tourism recovery during 2021 following the losses incurred during the Covid-19 pandemic.

8.2 The private sector led Tourism Business Improvement District is expect to raise up to £1.4m of investment in tourism for Blackpool over five years following its establishment in July 2021.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 Non

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None