

Date: 27 November 2007

Report: TURNTABLE PROJECT

Purpose of report

1. To provide members with an update about the Turntable project that is intended to lead to the improvement of facilities at the Dales Countryside Museum (DCM) in line with the recommendations of the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP).

Strategic Planning Framework

2. Information and recommendations contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:

- **Best Value Performance Plan**

Provide accessible high quality communications and services that positively influence people's enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities of the YDNP so that

- 85% of users are satisfied with the Authority's 'Promoting Understanding' services
- The four NPC have an average effectiveness rating of 90% by 2008
- at least 50% of visitors and 70% of residents have an understanding of National Park purposes and/or the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales by 2010.

Background

3. In May 2005, Yorkshire Culture invited officers to a meeting on social enterprise. A social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally re-invested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.

4. Organisations attending the meeting were invited to bid to take part in a pilot project. The Authority put in a bid for funding to help identify ways of increasing revenue and improving facilities at DCM. The bid was successful and the Authority was chosen to participate in the project.

5. The main outputs from the Turntable Project were agreed to be increasing the skill sets of officers and the funded production of three business cases to enable the Authority to decide which, if any, to take forward to detailed business planning. The three business

ideas agreed for consideration were enhancing retail services, a café at DCM and an interpretive soft-play area for children.

6. In September 2006 members approved the following recommendations:
 1. The Chief Executive be authorised to continue working with Yorkshire Culture and key partners towards the achievement of targets identified within the BVPP
 2. The member champion for Promoting Understanding be provided with regular updates
 3. The project be assessed against the 'learning from projects' criteria identified by the Audit and Review Committee
 4. Members be updated of significant developments
7. Since then an officer group has been working with Yorkshire Culture and their consultants to take this forward. It is fair to say there have been considerable delays in the last 12 months as Yorkshire Culture were required to make changes to comply with Government Office and EU funding protocols. This also affected the number of business ideas which could be progressed so only the most feasible two are now being taken forward – retail services and a café at DCM.

Current Position with Café at DCM

8. Officers have met with the consultants, Pelican, and are continuing to supply the required data to enable the consultants to assess the feasibility of a café at DCM. This will assess whether there is a market and, if so, on which basis the Authority could best proceed. Through this process the Authority has access to specialists in this type of business who can give an external viewpoint using experience gained from similar activities elsewhere.
9. Once this business case is completed, a report will be brought to members to decide whether the Authority would wish to take the idea of a café at DCM any further. If so, the next stage would be for officers to produce a detailed business plan. This could then be used to attract further external funding or relevant partners as appropriate.
10. At present the report to members is expected to be this financial year.

Current Position with Retail Services

11. The position with retail services is slightly more complicated. Given the delays with the Turntable Project, and the emerging difficult financial settlement for the Authority, in July 2007 members agreed that Carl Lis, William Weston, Steve Macaré and John Blackie work with officers to re-examine retail services and bring a further report to members.
12. This group has met and developed five strategic principles for retail. These are now incorporated into the External Funding Strategy also being considered by members at this meeting.
13. Once final strategic principles for retail are approved, the member officer working group will reconvene to develop a business plan.

14. As part of the Turntable Project there is a business case currently being produced for retail and this is expected this financial year. This business case will be reported to the member officer working group and will feed into the business planning process. The business case will provide an external viewpoint for the group to consider alongside other data.

15. The member officer working group is hoping to report the outcome of the business planning process to the Authority early in the new financial year.

Branding

16. As part of the Turntable Project £5k of funding has become available to begin branding work. Specifically this will start to develop sub-brands for retail and a café. This will link to planned branding work for the whole Authority to ensure consistency, for example in the use of the ram's head logo and the Britain's Breathing Spaces work.

Conclusions

17. The Turntable Project will deliver two business cases albeit significantly delayed. The business case for a café at DCM will be reported to the Authority for a decision on the next steps, the business case for retail services will feed into the member officer working group as part of their considerations.

RECOMMENDATION

18. Members are asked to note the report.

Annie Galloway
Head of External Affairs

14 November 2007