

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 2 - CULTURE AND TOURISM

Thursday, 22 March 2018

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair); Councillor Sam Kilby Shaw (Co Chair); Councillors Mohammed Aziz, Vicky Culbard, Brian Sargeant and Zoe Smith

CO-OPTED MEMBER: Martin Sutherland Royal and Derngate Theatres
Witnesses Kate Dent, Director, Britain's Best Surprise

Officers Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

Members of the Public Colin Spears
Mrs Spears

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

Martin Sutherland, Co-Optee, declared a personal interest in item 5(a), as he is on the Board of the Britain's Best Surprise.

3. DEPUTATIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

5. WITNESS EVIDENCE

(A) DIRECTOR, BRITAIN'S BEST SURPRISE

Kate Dent, Director, Britain's Best Surprise, addressed the Scrutiny Panel and commented.

- Britain's Best Surprise is a campaign for the county launched March 2017
- It promotes Northamptonshire and its many attractions. It is positioned as a world class destination
- The website objective started off as a "What's on Diary" and snowballed from there

- There are 20 million visitors to Northamptonshire, tourism supports 14,000 jobs and brings in £1 billion per year
- Britain's Best Surprise has plans to further develop its website, involve industry and direct traffic to the website. 15% of the traffic is from London and 25% from Northampton
- An Intern upkeep the website and quickly updates it
- There is a good presence on Social Media, around 8,000 followers
- Leaflets are in production and will be distributed to various locations
- Liaisons are taking place between Britain's Best Surprise and Economic Development at the Boroughs and Districts in Northamptonshire regarding a Destination Management Plan
- Britain's Best Surprise is very keen to work with partners locally, in particular around the new Silverstone Heritage centre and the potential that brings
- Links with the University are established and hugely important
- Britain's Best Surprise runs various campaigns such as churches, stately homes
- Themes are set:
 - 2019 Sport
 - 2020/21 Arts and Culture
 - 2022 American Heritage and its links

Kate Dent was thanked for her informative address.

AGREED: That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

6. FREEMAN OF THE BOROUGH

The Chair advised that the Freeman was unable to attend and had asked to attend the meeting in April 2018.

Therefore consideration of this item was deferred to the next meeting.

7. PRESENTATION - NORTHAMPTON MUSEUM

Consideration of this agenda item was deferred to the April meeting.

8. SITE VISIT

The Scrutiny Panel considered its report following its recent site visits, noting the conclusions.

The Chair commented on the value of the role of the Tourism Executive at Harborough and the value of the roles of Officers at Rugby regarding tourism.

The maintenance of monuments such as Eleanor Cross were highlighted as important.

Tourist Information Centres are very important and work well if linked to facilities such as cafes.

The Chair referred to the site visit of Delapre Abbey that the Panel had taken place earlier that day; commenting on the splendour of the restoration.

AGREED: That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

9. DESKTOP RESEARCH

The Scrutiny Panel considered a report that details the findings from recent desktop research.

AGREED: That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

The meeting concluded at 19:05 hours