

Tourism Officer

N.B. Members are reminded that staffing matters should not be discussed in open council, and therefore, no references should be made to any existing post holder or the performance of their duties.

1. Council currently provides support for tourism within Berwick via a Tourism Officer, who is paid to undertake duties that primarily consist of social media and website promotion of Berwick upon Tweed.
2. The increasing growth of social media as a means by which visitors identify destinations is well documented, both for day visitors and longer stay tourists.
3. Berwick upon Tweed has a number of significant events of its own, and is a key location for tourists wishing to enjoy events in the areas surrounding Berwick upon Tweed.
4. A well resourced and well managed social media presence for the town is therefore a key contribution the council can make to promoting Berwick as a tourism destination, and in amplifying messages delivered by other tourism venues or events within the town.
5. Council has not received reports on its performance with regard to its tourism work recently. Nor does it appear to have received a workplan or an explanation of the work undertaken.
6. A desktop review of the service and discussion with the post-holder identified that the post is under-resourced in terms of capacity to deliver management reports or workplans.
7. A further challenge to the service is the increasing growth of paid advertising via social media, both explicitly (via side bar advertisements) and via targeted promotion in selected customer's timelines. In order to be visible, increasingly Berwick events and the Berwick tourism offer will need to be supported by payments to media providers.

Recommendations

1. That provision be made in the 2017-18 to double the working hours available to the Tourism Officer, in order to enable the provision to council of workplans and performance reports, and
2. That provision be made in the 2017-18 budget for social media advertising expenditure of no more than £5000, to be approved by council as part of the agreed workplan.