

12 Service Review Programme – West Dorset Tourist Information Centres

The committee received and considered the report of the scrutiny working group following the scrutiny exercise in relation to the Service Review of West Dorset tourist information centres (TICs) and with particular regard to the TIC in Bridport. In addition, members considered the Business Case for the Bridport TIC and the associated equalities impact assessment.

Members expressed their support for the proposal for Bridport and it was proposed by J Sewell seconded by R Kayes

Decision

- (a) That the report of the scrutiny working group attached at appendix 1 of the report be agreed as the formal response of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Bridport Tourist Information Centre part of the West Dorset Tourist Information Centres Service Review, for inclusion within the report to the Executive Committee;
- (b) That the committee agree that the completed equality impact assessment for the Bridport Tourist Information Centre part of the service review attached at appendix 3 of the report, ensures that equality issues have been fully considered and that any adverse impacts of the proposed changes on different groups have been considered and, where possible, mitigated.

To agree the formal response of the committee in respect of the scrutiny of the Bridport Tourist Information Centre part of the West Dorset Tourist Information Centres Service Review process and viability of the options presented.

To provide the committee with the opportunity to consider the completed equality impact assessment for this part of the service review.

**SERVICE REVIEW: WEST DORSET TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES –
BRIPORT TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**

**REPORT OF SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

DATE: 12 JULY 2016

Scrutiny of Bridport Tourist Information Centre (TIC) element of the service review process complete with no additional work recommended
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Yes

Preferred option of scrutiny working group:

That the Management of Bridport TIC is transferred from West Dorset District Council to Bridport Town Council with a one-off payment of £150k, without undertaking further public consultation, and that the legal power to run the Bridport Charter Market is devolved from the district council to the town council, or a revised agreement provided, with no future fees payable.

SCRUTINY OF SERVICE REVIEW: WEST DORSET TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES – BRIPORT TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

Membership of Scrutiny Working Group:

Lead member: Councillor Daryl Turner

Councillors: Sandra Brown, Patrick Cooke, Dominic Elliott, Susie Hosford and Molly Rennie

Lead officer: Matt Ryan (Tourism and Events Manager)

Responsible Strategic Director: Martin Hamilton (Strategic Director)

Responsible Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mary Penfold (Enabling)

Brief description of service review subject to scrutiny:

West Dorset District Council operates four Tourist information Centres (TICs) located in Bridport, Dorchester, Lyme Regis and Sherborne. In 2013/14 the TIC's had over 419,000 customer visits together with enquiries by letter, phone and email. At Dorchester and Bridport TICs 50% of customers are local residents; with 70% in Sherborne and 15% in Lyme Regis. Total service costs were £1,130,000 in 2013/14 offset by £840,000 of income giving net running costs of £291,000.

The way in which visitors access information has changed in recent years. Developments in new technology and in consumer behaviour require a step change in information delivery across the tourism sector. The TIC review has been reframed by the Partnership Board (the Programme Board for the Service Review Programme) on 26th February 2015 as a Fundamental Review of all aspects of the service, including functions, budgets, staffing and systems within the service. Possible outcomes include TICs remaining but being run by other partners (Town councils, volunteer organisations or trusts), reduced District Council services or closure of TICs and greater reliance on on-line information provision.

Risks associated with this review include reputation damage linked to changing the model of service delivery; potential impacts on tourism experience and local economy if alternative information channels are not provided.

Please note that this report is in relation to the Bridport tourist information centre only.

Role of scrutiny: To ensure that the service review process undertaken is fit for purpose and that the options for change have been fully assessed using the agreed principles set out below.

To check that equality issues have been fully considered and mitigated through the equality impact assessment.

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To comment on the options proposed by the service review project team, make further suggestions for change that may have been overlooked or discounted and to make a recommendation to the WDDC Executive Committee on their preferred way forward.

Area examined	Key principle met?
Has the review considered all the stages of the service review process and have these been effectively carried out?	Yes

Comments:

The scrutiny working group note that public consultation has not been undertaken in respect of the recommended way forward for this part of the service review as the proposal will not result in a change to service but only a change to the operator of the tourist information centre (see notes set out in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of the business case).

Area examined	Key principle met?
Have the linkages and impacts on other services and partners been properly explored and accounted for?	Yes

Comments:

The scrutiny working group note that full discussion has been held on the proposals between Bridport Town Council and officers of the district council. Members note that there is a willingness from Bridport Town Council to run this service.

Some concern is expressed with regard to the future lack of control by the district council and the risks of possible service change once the tourist information centre is transferred to the town council. However, it is noted that the district council will set out their expectations for the service moving forward when the service is transferred and close contact will be maintained between the manager of the tourist information centre and the council's Visitor Services Manager.

Area examined	Key principle met?
Are the proposed options for change deliverable, realistic in the timeframe and accurately costed?	Yes

Comments:

Area examined	Key principle met?
Are the savings proposed deliverable and represent value for money?	Yes

Comments:

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Area examined	Key principle met?
Has the customer been placed at the centre of the review process and has all stakeholder requirements been focussed on appropriately?	Yes
Comments:	
The scrutiny working group note that full stakeholder engagement has been undertaken and reiterate that the recommended way forward represents a change in the operator of the service and not the actual service provided.	
Area examined	Key principle met?
Have equality issues been fully considered and where possible mitigated, including clear identification of the adverse impacts of the proposed changes on different groups?	Yes
Equality Impact Assessment complete?	Yes
Comments:	
The service review project team have completed an equality impact assessment which will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 th July 2016.	
The recommended way forward represents a change in the operator of the service and not the actual service provided.	
Any other issues identified in the review that will require further development or research	
Close contact to be maintained between the district council and the town council.	
There will also need to be close dialogue between the district council and town council in respect of the future website tourism offer which both bodies may use moving forward.	
Comments on options set out in the business case	
Further suggestions for change that may have been overlooked or discounted	

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Preferred option of the scrutiny working group

The scrutiny working group support the recommendation of the service review project team:

That the Management of Bridport TIC is transferred from WDDC to Bridport Town Council with a one-off payment of £150k, without undertaking further public consultation, and that the legal power to run the Bridport Charter Market is devolved from the district council to the town council, or a revised agreement provided, with no future fees payable.

Report produced by the Scrutiny Working Group

Date: 27th June 2016