

MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	26 NOVEMBER 2009
TITLE OF REPORT:	RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF TOURISM
PORTFOLIO AREA:	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To respond to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee review of tourism.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

THAT the response to the 14 recommendations (see Appendix 1) be agreed.

Key Points Summary

- The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Community Services has considered the recommendations contained in the report of 18 April 2008.
- The Cabinet Member's response to each recommendation is set out in Appendix 1.

Alternative Options

- 1 That the original recommendations are accepted in full. This would, however, in one case conflict with existing Council policy and in another lead to overspend on budget.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Geoff Hughes, Director of Regeneration on Tel: (01432) 260695

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 The majority of the recommendations are agreed or agreed in principle. There are two not agreed.
- 3 Recommendation 2: Retain direct control over tourism information services. Never combine the functions of a TIC with those of an 'Info in Herefordshire' office.
- 4 Recommendation 8: Complement each of the other 'spoke' TICs with 2.5 fte paid staff plus any available volunteers.
- 5 As regards recommendation 2, the review group felt "where it might be practicable, the two might (Info and TICs) with advantage be co-located but they should not be combined, the TIC should invariably be staffed by appropriate specialists". Considering the current financial climate the option of combining the tourism service with Info should not be ruled out.
- 6 As regards recommendation 8, this felt too costly to implement across all TICs. Most TICs have 2 members of staff though some lone working does take place to cover breaks.

Introduction and Background

- 7 Community Services Scrutiny Committee brought forward a report reviewing tourism services in Herefordshire on 18th April 2008. Since that time the report's findings were submitted to Cabinet for consideration on 30th June 2009. However, Cabinet deferred consideration of the report and the report has since been revised.

Key Considerations

- 8 Many issues raised in the review are still relevant. However, the financing of the service has become more critical considering the TICs are a non statutory service and does not directly contribute to any priority indicators.
- 9 To reflect many of the points made in the review an asset management plan for TICs is in production and will be presented to the cabinet member for consideration.

Community Impact

- 10 TICs are seen as a key market town presence and a "symbol" of the Council's investment in market towns and tourism. They are used approximately 50% by local people, though visitor number have been declining as people use pre-visit web information.

Financial Implications

- 11 All costs must be met from within existing budgets if the recommendations, as presented, are accepted.

Legal Implications

- 12 Legal requirement regarding early termination of leases.

Risk Management

- 13 Failure to provide effective tourism services would impact on the economic life of the county.

The Executive's response to the recommendations made by Scrutiny seeks to balance this against finite budgets and existing policy.

Consultees

14 None (for this report)

Appendices

15 Appendix 1 Recommendations arising from Scrutiny review of Tourism

16 Appendix 2 Scrutiny Review of Tourism

Background Papers

- None identified