

CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 51

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: VisitBrighton Contact Centre Review
Date of Meeting: 8 December 2009
Report of: The Director of Culture & Enterprise
Contact Officer: Name: **Suzanne Mantell** Tel: **29-2613**
E-mail: Suzanne.mantell@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report sets out the options for the future of the VisitBrighton Contact Centre service, as identified as a work stream in the Visitor Services Strategy 2006.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

(i) to note the VisitBrighton Contact Centre Review set out in the appendix to this report, and the recommendation section following consultation with stakeholders.

(ii) note the feedback given by the Culture, Tourism & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

(iii) approve the relocation of the contact centre to the Royal Pavilion and introduction of a new, local rate enquiry number.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 VisitBrighton is the city's official tourism "arm" and is responsible for marketing the destination to visitors, selling the destination as a leisure, business and conference destination, and providing services to visitors once they have arrived in the city.
- 3.2 The Visitor Services team within VisitBrighton provide the front line services at the Visitor Information Centre, and via a dedicated Contact Centre, where staff handle enquiries by telephone, by email and by post.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation has taken place with a wide range of stakeholders, including VisitBrighton Partners, Tourism South East, South Downs National Park, and VisitBrighton staff.
- 4.2 Regular mystery shopping exercises and the fact that we have won regional and national awards tell us that the overall service offered is one of quality. However, through our regular contact with customers we know that visitors are unhappy that we use a premium rate line. Although we receive only a low number of complaints, more than half of those received are solely relating to the fact that we operate a Premium Rate enquiry line. The recommendation we are making addresses this area of dissatisfaction.
- 4.3 Feedback from the stakeholder and staff consultation shows a clear recommendation to proceed with option 5, ie to relocate the contact centre to the Royal Pavilion and to introduce a new local rate number for the service. Full details of the feedback are given in the VisitBrighton Contact Centre Review set out in the appendix to this report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Option 5 in the appendix represents the best value for money. Part of the business case for the ticketing system and call centre at the Royal Pavilion was that it could eventually be shared with Visitor Services – this will improve the value for money of the call centre investment.
- The small cost of losing the Premium Rate Line could be met by the efficiencies and custom arising from the extra call handling capacities of a shared call centre.

Finance Officer Consulted: Mr Peter Francis

29th October 2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 This report sets out a series of options, none of which have adverse legal or Human Rights implications.

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce

21st October 2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 If the Cabinet Member agrees with the recommendations set out in the report then the implications for all Equalities groups will be positive, as it will

make the service more accessible to visitors, particularly those on lower incomes and from overseas. For further information please refer to the Equalities Impact Assessment for VisitBrighton's Visitor Information Service team.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no sustainability implications to consider.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no crime and disorder implications consider.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no crime and disorder implications consider.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 There is the potential for closer partnership working with the Royal Pavilion team.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The alternative options, and feedback on each from the consultation, are included in the VisitBrighton Contact Centre Review set out in the appendix to this report.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To improve the service offered to visitors at the important pre-planning stage of their visitor journey.
- 7.2 To allow the VisitBrighton team to more easily maximise conversion of enquiries to bookings and so increase revenue.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. VisitBrighton Contact Centre Review

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. Visitor Services Strategy 2006

2. Visitor Services Equality Impact Assessment

Background Documents

1. Visitor Services Strategy 2006
2. Visitor Services Equality Impact Assessment