Tourism VFM
Task Group Notes

Notes of the meeting of the Tourism VFM Task Group held on Thursday 8 November 2012 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde

Members present:
Councillor Anderson
Councillor E Anderton
Councillor M Anderton
Councillor Lady Atkins (Chairman)
Councillor Balmain
Councillor Brooks
Councillor Cocker
Councillor Wilson

Other Members present:
Councillor Lynne Bowen, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture

Officers present:
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

TM.53 Apologies
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Gandhi.

TM.54 Declarations of Interest
None.

TM.55 Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder
Cllr Lynne Bowen, Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder, attended the meeting to comment upon her vision for the future of tourism in Wyre and to answer questions from task group members.
Cllr Bowen confirmed that the tourism budget for 2012/13 of £408,000 was inclusive of back office costs. The direct costs for tourism, excluding support service charges, totalled £178,000. This included the staffing costs for a slimmed-down team, comprising one Tourism Officer and two Supervisors for the Tourist Information Centres, but excluded the Tourism Development Manager.

It was intended that the Fleetwood Tourist Information Centre be relocated at the Marine Hall, subject to a successful Capital Programme Bid. This would result in annual savings of £35,000 per annum and a one-off receipt in the region of £31,500 from the sale of the existing TIC building. The council would increase the signage in that area to ensure that visitors were encouraged to go to the Marine Hall and gardens.

It was also hoped that the Cleveleys TIC would be sold and the service delivered from a building that was shared with another organisation, the precise arrangements for which were yet to be confirmed. A variety of options were currently being considered, including a temporary building that could be removed during the winter months.

It was planned to leave the Garstang TIC as it is.

Cllr Bowen confirmed that the Wyre Holiday Guide would be produced in house for 2013/14, which would deliver savings of around 50% on the costs for 2012/13. Tourism officers had worked much more closely with the Communications Team to achieve this.

Regarding the Wyre Tourism Association (WTA), Cllr Bowen said that this group of interested tourism businesses met regularly with the council. She said that the Association provided a “louder voice for Wyre” and had been very successful, as shown by the nominations received for various awards.

Cllr Bowen said that the council worked very closely with Marketing Lancashire; the Chief Executive had recently attended a meeting of the WTA.

Another recent development was the itinerary that had been compiled for the benefit of the large cruise liners soon to be docking at Liverpool.

Cllr Bowen concluded by saying that despite the trend towards increased technology (including tourists increasingly accessing websites for tourism information) it should be remembered that many of the older visitors preferred face to face contact; it would be a shame to lose the TICs, particularly as they played a wide and valuable role in the local community.

Task group members asked a number of questions of Cllr Bowen, particularly regarding:
The Wyre Tourism Association and its falling membership

The comments made to the task group by the WTA Vice Chairman, Michael Taylor

The possibility of forging closer links with Lancashire County Council

The ‘Visit Wyre’ brochure

The visitor questionnaire included in the brochure

The task group’s view that individual towns should be promoted, not the name of “Wyre”

The future of TICs in Wyre, including the apparently excellent location of the Fleetwood TIC and the relatively poor location of the Cleveleys TIC

The Visit Wyre website

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bowen for her attendance and advised her that they would take her comments into account when finalising the task group’s recommendations

**TM.56 Tourism Task Group – Draft Report and Recommendations**

Members considered the draft task group report, the conclusions drawn from the review and their proposed recommendations to Cabinet.

It was agreed that a revised draft report be prepared, to include the group’s recommendations. The report was to be circulated to task group members before a final meeting on 4 December.

It was intended that the report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their endorsement on 17 December 2012 prior to consideration by Cabinet on 16 January 2013.

**TM.57 Date and time of next meeting**

Tuesday 4 December at 6pm in CR1.