

# Executive – 18 June 2019

## ALLOCATION OF Hinkley Point C S106 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE FUNDS

This matter is the responsibility of Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) Executive Cllr Habib Farbahi Lead Member for Asset Management and Economic Development

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### 1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consult with Council on a suggested approach for allocating Hinkley Point C (HPC) Section 106 funds for Tourist Information Centres (TIC) for the next 3 years - 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To recommend the allocation of £72,000 of Hinkley Point C (HPC) Section 106 funding over three years to the three West Somerset based Tourist Information Centres (TIC) in Minehead, Watchet and Porlock that are identified to receive allocations under the Development Consent Order (DCO) Agreement.

### 3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

#### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
<b>Negative perception, damage to Council reputation and loss of S106 funding:</b> Without support there will be a decline in tourism information services, which will lead to a lack of quality information for tourism businesses and customers at a time when the construction period of the HPC project could have a negative impact on the perceptions of the area. A lack of support could also be damaging to the reputation of the Council amongst local communities, where TIC's are highly regarded. Another side effect would be that EDF could also seek to claim back Section 106 funding, as per the DCO agreement.	5	4	20

<b>Mitigating the risks:</b> <i>Putting in place Service Level Agreements with TIC's to provide good levels of service and information to visitors and businesses will significantly lessen the likelihood and impact of negative perceptions of the area.</i>	3	3	9
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### Risk Scoring Matrix

<b>Likelihood</b>	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Impact</b>							

<b>Likelihood of risk occurring</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description (chance of occurrence)</b>
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

## **4 Background and Full details of the Report**

### **4.1 Role and Responsibilities of Tourism Information Services**

4.1.1 Tourism Information Centres (TIC) are the 'eyes and ears' of tourism intelligence across the area. They are a front-line service, and via their tried and trusted relationships with tourism providers and visitors are aware of visitor trends, opportunities and threats well in advance of any statistical analysis.

4.1.2 The role of tourism information services has changed considerably over the past decade.

The growth of the internet, and other modernised tourism marketing models, has minimised the role that the TIC has in supporting the consumer to research their holiday destination in advance of prior bookings. However, it still has significant strength in supporting visitors once they have arrived within a destination, and helping to support accommodation providers and other key attractions in being an integral part of place based marketing and promotion. Information Centres, also traditionally provide a range of services for the local community as well.

4.1.3 In respect of the Hinkley Point C Project, information services have a pivotal role in:

- Acquiring first-hand information in relation to any 'issues' that are impacting on tourism visits and spend, and rapidly relaying that information to local authorities.
- Providing an important and vital conduit to businesses in terms of the dissemination of information / messages / alerts.
- Establishing an important resource to Hinkley Point C Construction Workers and their families, in helping to promote the area and provide information for recreational opportunities.
- Delivering key aspects of the Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership (HTAP) plan, such as providing travel information, supporting PR activity, and assisting projects that have arisen from the HTAP Strategy or Coastal Community team local economic plans.
- Helping to maintain a positive perception of the area in supporting visitors and businesses in finding accommodation and things to do, whilst the potentially negative impacts of Hinkley Point C take place (e.g. increased traffic slowing journeys through Bridgwater, visual impact from Quantock Hills).

### **4.2 Tourism Information Centre Delivery**

4.2.1 Support for the three tourist information centres in Minehead, Watchet and Porlock, is delivered via service level agreements that set out the key tasks and outputs expected of each in return for funding. The scope of these agreements relates to

the size and scale of the TIC capacity for delivery against the amount of funding awarded.

**Minehead Information Centre** is located in the area's key seaside town, employs professional TIC staff, delivers a comprehensive service and has a responsibility for promoting the wider district.

**Porlock Visitor Centre** employs professional and volunteer staff in providing an all year round opening service. Porlock also has a responsibility for promoting the National Park, and receives additional annual funding from the Park Authority.

**Watchet Tourist Information** - employs professional and volunteer staff, and is now located in the Town's Boat Museum. Staff at the Centre have expressed a willingness to lead on social media training and implementation across the three TIC's.

The table below sets out the tasks and outputs for each TIC which will be commensurate with funding levels awarded to each TIC.

Task	By when	Targets / Outputs
Maintain and upkeep tourism industry database ( <b>Minehead TIC only</b> )	Ongoing	Fully up-to-date database which includes District wide information
Collect intelligence / information and evidence in respect of the impacts of the HPC project, and establish a communications strategy for the rapid dissemination of information. <i>This is a vital part of the service – to ensure that the MIC receives up-to-date information in respect of traffic congestion or other issues, and is able to communicate this to tourism providers, and support them with tactics for ensuring that customers visiting the area are not significantly disadvantaged.</i>	Ongoing	Compile 12 e-newsletters per year ( <b>Minehead TIC only</b> )  Disseminate Hinkley related travel information when required potentially provided by Somerset CC (Minehead / Watchet)  Using social media platforms as frequently as required to disseminate all travel information when arises to contacts and via twitter (Minehead & Watchet)
Delivery of specific HTAP projects including Ambassador Scheme ( <b>Minehead TIC</b> )	Ongoing	TIC to assist with assessment of volunteers Facilitate ambassador scheme from centre -Take bookings, keep records and volunteer contact information, store kit and administer any voluntary donations received

Implement Social Media strategy development and training across the 3 TICs	Ongoing	Continue to contribute and develop content in line with SM strategy plan for all platforms. Ongoing training in social media to enable development of Minehead / Watchet / Porlock social media channels
Improving increased Visitor Services (Minehead / Watchet)	Ongoing	Aim to maximise opening hours throughout the summer season. Aim to provide a consistent service throughout the winter months.
Growing the capacity of Minehead / Watchet Information Centres	Year on year	5% increase in income 5% increase in unique website visits
TIC Manager to attend quarterly update meetings (convened by SWT)	Ongoing	Up to 4 meetings per year Monthly update/ liaison with nominated SWT Officer

#### 4.3 **Section 106 Allocations**

- 4.3.1 Both the S106 Agreements for Site Preparation Works (SPW) and Development Consent Order (DCO) made provision for allocations to TICs. The SPW allocation was for £200,000 and was shared with Sedgemoor and Somerset County Councils (The West Somerset Council reports of November 2016 and July 2018 details all previous allocations and are attached as Appendix A and B)

However in summary DCO makes provision over 4 separate allocations of £40,000 plus indexation totalling £160,000 plus indexation (Total is £178,718.89) specifically for TIC's in Minehead, Watchet and Porlock. To date £38,350.67 of that has been committed.

#### 4.4 **Proposed allocations for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22**

- 4.4.1 The following allocations for TIC's over the next 3 years are proposed:

##### **2019/20**

<b>Centre</b>	<b>Allocation</b>
Minehead	£12,000
Watchet	£10,000
Porlock	£4,000

##### **2020/21**

<b>Centre</b>	<b>Allocation</b>
Minehead	£11,000
Watchet	£9,000
Porlock	£4,000

#### **2021/22**

<b>Centre</b>	<b>Allocation</b>
Minehead	£10,000
Watchet	£8,000
Porlock	£4,000

The allocations reflect the scale of activity undertaken by the respective Centres in line with the activity that is outlined within the Service Level Agreements. It should be noted that both Minehead and Watchet Centres open more hours throughout the year, are closer to Hinkley Point C and are tasked with additional requirements via Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership. The Porlock Centre is also an important resource for the areas tourism industry, not least because of its location within Exmoor National Park. Therefore, it is considered justifiable to utilise HPC funds to match Exmoor National Park's annual contribution.

## **5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities**

- 5.1 In terms of the Council's broad priorities for People, Place and Prosperity, this proposal will impact on the following:

People: Improved health and well being

Place: Improved infrastructure to support communities

Prosperity: Attracted and enabled investment, innovation, growth and tourism

- 5.2 Tourist Information Centres play a key role in local communities, supporting day and staying visitors to enjoy the area. This could include visitors from other parts of the district, and benefiting local people with information. They play a key role in promoting the area, use of green space and visiting local businesses. They are regarded as key piece of supporting infrastructure from which the communities can support visitors and grow interest in the area.
- 5.3 Via service level agreements centres will be tasked with supporting PR activity and communicating messages with the industry and visitors via newsletters. This could include promoting the area or providing up to date travel information about congestion on the roads. Centres will also be tasked with supporting the Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership in making improvements to the visitor experience, including supporting the new local ambassador guided walks scheme and improving skills, such as social media and welcoming international visitors via training.

## **6 Finance / Resource Implications**

- 6.1 This proposal, if approved, will have no impact on Somerset West and Taunton Council General Fund as it is funded entirely from the s106 funding from Hinkley Point C. The project complies with Schedule 4 of the Development Consent Order (DCO) agreement (Economic Development & Tourism) heading. The agreements specifically dictate that the allocations are to be spent on supporting Tourist Information Centres in Minehead, Watchet and Porlock, to help them mitigate the impact that Hinkley Point C (HPC) will have on Tourism. All of the spending on this proposal is revenue spending therefore it will have no impact on the Council's capital programme.

Under the DCO funding agreement, we have received 4 x £40,000 Instalments plus Indexation. Currently, there is a balance of £139,318.22 unallocated in the DCO. The balance takes into account previous allocations agreed by Council:

- £10,352 allocated during 2017/18 (as agreed by West Somerset Council in November 2016)
- £28,000 allocated during 2018/19 (as agreed by West Somerset Council in July 2018)

This proposal for the three allocations totals £72,000. After this period it leaves £67,318.22 for further allocations to be determined post peak of construction.

- 6.2 Decisions regarding allocation from this fund must go through Somerset West and Taunton Council's decision making process.

## **7 Legal Implications (if any)**

- 7.1 The Hinkley Point C DCO Section 106 is a legal document, therefore allocations need to reflect those requirements.

## **8 Environmental Impact Implications (if any)**

- 8.1 Local delivery of information services through local tourist information centres enables a reduction in carbon emissions as no transport requirements are needed.

## **9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)**

- 9.1 Not applicable.

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)**

- 10.1 All service level agreements emphasise the need for tourist information centres to operate good equality, diversity and bullying at work policies.

**11 Social Value Implications (if any)**

11.1 Not applicable.

**12 Partnership Implications (if any)**

12.1 Each service level agreement is set up with the organisation responsible for the tourist information service in the town or village. The work involves close partnership to deliver and achieve tasks and outputs. The service level agreements set out how each partner will work with the other in order to achieve shared goals, as well as how to deal with issues and risks. This includes the paying back of funds allocated if tasks and outputs are not achieved to the satisfaction of Somerset West and Taunton Council officers.

**13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)**

13.1 Tourist information centres play an important role in the community in providing advice and help to local people in respect of information on events, things to do, travel and local amenities. Centres promote walks and active tourism opportunities, as well as provide volunteer opportunities.

**14 Asset Management Implications (if any)**

14.1 There are no asset related issues.

**15 Consultation Implications (if any)**

15.1 Up to date service level agreement reports and conversations with individual tourist information centres have helped to refine the content of this report.

**16 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)**

16.1 None.

**Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes** (delete as appropriate)
- **Full Council – No**

**Reporting Frequency: Once only Ad-hoc Quarterly**



Twice-yearly      Annually

**Appendix A – WSC Council Report November 2016**

**Appendix B – WSC Cabinet Report July 2018**

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