

Report Number: For West Somerset Council Use

West Somerset Council

Cabinet – 11th July 2018

ALLOCATION OF HPC S106 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE FUNDS

This matter is the responsibility of Cabinet Member Cllr Andrew Hadley Lead Member for Economic Regeneration & Tourism

Report Author: Corinne Matthews Economic Regeneration & Tourism Manager

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consult with Council on a suggested approach for allocating Hinkley Point C Section 106 funds for Tourist Information Centres for 2018/19
- 1.2 To consult with Council on a suggested approach for post 2018/19 allocations

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To recommend to Council the allocation of £28,000 from HPC S106 allocations for tourist information centres from the Development Consent Order Works Agreement that makes allowance of £160,000 with the details in respect of drawdown outlined in paragraph 6.1

Staggered payments to be made in line with service level agreements with individual centres, which total £28,000 for the purposes of supporting Minehead, Porlock and Watchet tourist information services for the financial years 2018/19

- 2.2 To request the Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership to undertake a strategic review of the TIC allocations post April 2019, taking into account the tourism priorities of the three Coastal Community Teams that operate in Minehead, Watchet and Porlock as well as the individual requirements of the Centres.

3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
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.	5	4	20

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<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

Likelihood	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
Impact							

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
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.

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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 HPC 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 HPC 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 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.

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 all year round opening hours 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 CCTs.

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

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Task	By when	Targets / Outputs
Maintain and upkeep tourism industry database (Minehead TIC only)	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 (Minehead TIC only) 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 (Minehead TIC)	On-going	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
Facilitate Social Media strategy development and training across the 3 TICs (Watchet TIC)	By Autumn 2019	Contribute or develop content strategy plan for all platforms. Minimum of three days of 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	March 2019	5% increase in income 5% increase in unique website visits
TIC Manager to attend quarterly update meetings of WS TIC Managers (convened by WSC)	Ongoing	Up to 4 meetings per year Monthly update/ liaison with nominated WSC Officer

4.3 Section 106 Allocations

4.3.1 Both the S106 Agreements for SPW and DCO made provision for allocations to TICs. The SPW allocation was for £200,000 and was shared with Sedgemoor and Somerset County Councils (The Council report of November 2016 details all previous allocations) The full detail of DCO TIC amounts is detailed in Paragraph 6.1. However in summary DCO makes provision over 4 separate allocations of £40,000 totalling £160,000 specifically for West Somerset TICs. To date £10,352 of that has been committed.

4.4 Proposed allocations for 2018/19

4.4.1 The following allocations are proposed for the individual Centres

Centre	Allocation
Minehead	£12,500
Watchet	£11,500
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 all year round, are closer to HPC and are tasked with additional requirements via HPTA. The Porlock Centre is also an important resource for the West Somerset 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 The Council's second key theme around Business & Enterprise aims to 'Support and promote West Somerset's vital tourism and agricultural sectors', as well as 'Maximise the local economic benefits from Hinkley Point C'.

5.2 The third key theme around Our Place & Infrastructure also aims to 'Mitigate negative impacts on the community from the construction phase of Hinkley Point C'.

5.3 Support for tourist information centres across West Somerset will help in achieving both key aims. 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 West Somerset Council General Fund as it is funded entirely from the s106 funding from Hinkley Point C. The project complies with Schedule 4 of the DCO agreement (Economic Development & Tourism) heading. The agreements specifically dictate that the allocations are to be spent on supporting Tourist Information Centres, to help them mitigate the impact that Hinkley Point C 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, we are due 4 x £40,000 Index Adjusted Instalments. We have received 3 and the last one is due in May 2019. Currently, there is a balance of £126,724.99 unallocated in the DCO plus what we are due next year. The balance takes into account that £10,352 has been allocated during 2017/18 (as agreed by Council in November 2016)

- 6.2 Decisions regarding allocation from this fund must go through West Somerset Council's decision making process. The process for this approval will go via Full Council as the total amount is above £25,000.

7 Legal Implications (if any)

- 7.1 The HPC 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 West Somerset 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, other than to remind members that the building the Watchet Tourist Office operates from is owned by West Somerset Council.

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 yet.

Democratic Path:

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

Reporting Frequency: Once only Ad-hoc Quarterly
 Twice-yearly Annually

Contact Officers

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