

# ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## REPORT TO AND DECISION OF LITTLEHAMPTON REGENERATION SUB COMMITTEE ON 18 NOVEMBER 2019

### PART A : REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Visitor Information Provision in Littlehampton

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Margaret Murphy

**DATE:** 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**EXTN:** 37859

**PORTFOLIO AREA:** Economy Group

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Following the unforeseen closure of the Look and Sea Centre on 31st August 2018, alternative locations in Littlehampton, as sources of Visitor Information for the town and the surrounding area, have been arranged and set in place with local businesses and organisations. This report provides an overview of the new arrangements, progress to date and evolving plans.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Littlehampton Regeneration Sub-Committee notes the report.

### 1. BACKGROUND:

The Council had worked for several years with The Look & Sea Trustees, who provided a fully operational and staffed Visitor Information Centre on the ground floor of the Look & Sea Visitor Attraction and Harbour Lights Café, under a Service Level Agreement with the Council. This arrangement worked well providing good customer service in an excellent location situated between the town centre, public transport venues, riverside and seafront. Unfortunately, in August 2018, the operators unexpectedly entered into administration and the Harbour Lights Café and Look and Sea Centre closed. The Council took the decision in October 2018 that the whole of the building would be let in future as a café/ restaurant/ bar and that the Visitor Information Centre would not be re-provided at this location.

It was decided however, that a physical Visitor Information presence in the town was still desirable in addition to the existing information sources: [www.sussexbythesea.com](http://www.sussexbythesea.com); plus proactive social media activity; a printed visitor guide; destination marketing and promotion and an email enquiry facility.

The Council already has some very successful partnership arrangements for hosting Visitor Information leaflet pick-up facilities within Arundel Museum and The Regis Centre/Alexandra Theatre in Bognor Regis and a plan was put together to identify alternative locations in Littlehampton to act as host partners providing sources of Littlehampton local Visitor Information about the town and the surrounding area.

Due to the layout of Littlehampton it was decided to work with a variety of existing local

businesses and organisations in various locations: town centre, riverside, seafront and West Beach.

## **2. CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS 2019**

Nine businesses / organisations have kindly agreed to host information in the form of the most relevant (local) tourist information leaflets and event posters (where space allows) and their volunteers/staff also help with local area and Littlehampton visitor enquiries.

These new partner businesses are now known as Littlehampton Local Visitor Information Points (LLVIPs).

Guidance has been given to each host partner to use their own local knowledge, and the official website [www.sussexbythesea.com](http://www.sussexbythesea.com) if necessary, to help answer questions. Stocks of specific local quality information leaflets are supplied by the Council's Tourism Development Officer.

### **Locations of new 'LLVIPS' (Littlehampton Local Visitor Information Points)**

- Littlehampton Museum and Town Council reception. Open Monday – Saturday
- Crafter's Corner, Clifton Road. Open Tuesday – Saturday
- Bah Humbug Sweets – open every day
- Pier Road Coffee & Art – open every day
- Harbour Lights Café – open every day
- Harbour Board Office – open weekdays(winter) plus weekends(summer)
- West Beach Café - – open every day(summer) Wednesday – Sunday (winter)
- Littlehampton Beach Office – April – September
- Arun Civic Centre Reception, Maltravers Road. Open Monday – Friday

**Promotion:** Details of all these locations with their opening times are provided on a colourful map showing the new locations along with other ways of sourcing Visitor Information for the town and district: online, email, post and recorded information.

Maps are on display in all the LLVIP partner businesses and the town's Information Boards. As each business has slightly different opening hours, visitors are able to easily locate the best business for them to visit for information on any given day.

Each location also has on display a distinctive circular window sticker including the urls for the websites [www.sussexbythesea.com/littlehampton](http://www.sussexbythesea.com/littlehampton) and [www.visitlittlehampton.co.uk](http://www.visitlittlehampton.co.uk)

Artwork for the stickers and a pdf of the map is added to the online venue listing for each of the locations at [www.sussexbythesea.com](http://www.sussexbythesea.com) and also at [www.sussexbythesea.com/visitorinformation](http://www.sussexbythesea.com/visitorinformation) giving more promotion to the LLVIP businesses. This artwork and information will be provided to Littlehampton Town Council to be published at: [www.visitlittlehampton.co.uk](http://www.visitlittlehampton.co.uk) too.

A Memorandum of Understanding is being provided, tailored for each host partner LLVIP. Different operational challenges are being addressed with experience and branded information displays sourced and supplied to each location, to fit differing spaces available within each business.

### 3. FUTURE PLANS AND PROPOSALS

#### Electronic Promotional Tools

Further operational discussions are planned around the possibility of digital information in the form of iPad / other digital signage within selected LLVIP locations.

#### Leaflet storage and distribution

Currently the supply and distribution of local leaflets to the LLVIPS, alongwith Arundel Museum and Regis Centre VIPs is carried out by the Tourism Development Officer. Although time consuming, it has enabled a good relationship to grow with the businesses alongside a growing knowledge of what works well - and not so well. It is hoped that an online ordering system can be developed and used by all partners in the future with a regular distribution service, working with a local partner.

#### Training and skills

There may be an opportunity to arrange for some customer service/ tourism knowledge skills training to be delivered to these and other local tourism businesses.

This could utilise the industry standard Tourism South East (regional Tourist Board) "Welcome Host" resources. As a nationally recognised qualification this could be branded 'Sussex by the Sea' / Arun District Council and delivered in partnership with Tourism South East (official facilitator) to focus on local tourist information of all kinds, as well as customer service, to the benefit of volunteers, staff, the organisations involved and other tourism businesses (local hotels, restaurants, attractions etc) and of course, visitors.

### 4. PROPOSALS:

None, this report is for information only

### 5. OPTIONS:

None, this report is for information only

### 6. CONSULTATION:

None, this report is for information only

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council	X	
Relevant District Ward Councillors		X
Other groups/persons (please specify) Local LLVIP businesses	X	
7. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 8 below)	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal		X
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		

Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		
Sustainability	X	
Asset Management/Property/Land		
Technology	X	
Other (please explain)		

#### **8. IMPLICATIONS:**

Sustainability - officer time resources for the ongoing operational delivery of this amenity.

Financial – any set up costs e.g. leaflet display equipment and signage, will be funded from the Council's existing tourism budget

#### **9. REASON FOR THE DECISION:**

This report is for information only

#### **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Agenda for the Cabinet meeting held on 15 October 2018

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/20181015/Agenda/Agenda.pdf>

Decision Notice from the Cabinet meeting held on 15 October 2018

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/20181015/Agenda/Decisions.pdf>

Link to <https://www.sussexbythesea.com/visitor-information> map and information