

Name of Review: Visitor Information Centre

What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review

The Regeneration & Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee have decided to look at events and tourism at the Visitor Information Centre as a review topic for 2012-2013. They wish to investigate the current priorities arrangement for providing visitors with help and information with a view to making recommendations to improve the service and take a view on how this service is being delivered elsewhere in Kent.

Primary Objective

To establish if there is an economically viable scenario to return the visitor information centre or part of the visitor information centre to the town hall.

What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 9 protected characteristics:

- Consideration will need to be made as to whether there are any issues affecting a protected characteristic when identifying recommendations.

Which witnesses are required?

- **Simon Lace & Laura Dickson** – to provide an overview of how the current arrangement work and clarification of the issue around the HLD grant and to understand how the VIC benefits the museum.
- **Town Centre Management** – to gain an understanding of their aspirations for Jubilee Square.
- **Cllr Gordon Newton**
- **Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development**
- **Representative from Visit England**

Other ways to seek evidence? E.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation. *

- Mystery Shopping of current service
- Survey other local authorities VIC arrangements
- Survey of frontline staff (past and present) dealing with VIC enquires
- Best Practice from CFPS and Visitor Information Provider of the Year

- Possible site visits to Folkestone & Rochester if required.

What information/training is needed?

- VIC Budget
- Minutes from OSC BVR 13 December 2005
- VIC Briefing Note – OSC Customer & External Services 28 February 2006
- OSC Tourism Review 2001
- Minimum staffing requirements for Town Hall and Museum reception /VIC desk
- Detail of the numbers of Town hall tours and participants for last three years to gage footfall

Suggested time for review and report completion date

- 31 July – Scope to Committee
- 17 August deadline for circulating information
- w/c 20 August – informal evidence gathering meeting
- w/c 3 September – site visits if required & 2nd meeting report drafting
- 25 September – full report to committee for consideration

How does the review link to council priorities?

- For Maidstone to have a growing economy

How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?

(delete all that do not apply)

- 1 Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
- 2 Enables the voice and concerns of the public
- 3 Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role
- 4 Drives improvement in public services

Any co-optees or expert witnesses?

* What do you know about the equality groups and the make-up of the people using the service or in the area? Qualitative and quantitative information
Think of the wider 'community' including people who possibly do not currently use the service but could or should.