

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 13 OCTOBER 2015**

**UPDATE OF VISITOR INFORMATION IN ANGUS**

**REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**ABSTRACT**

This report gives an update on activity to ensure effective visitor information services in Angus following the closure of the Brechin VisitScotland Information Centre in October 2014.

**1. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the progress that has been made with regards to the provision of visitor information in Angus since the closure of the Brechin VisitScotland Information Centre in October 2014.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN**

- 2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Reference is made to Report 403/14 of the Development and Enterprise Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014. This report recommended the closure of the Pictavia Visitor Centre at Brechin. This included the closure of the associated VisitScotland Information Centre. The following programme of measures was proposed to ensure that a high standard of visitor information would continue to be available across Angus. When referring to 'tourist information points' this refers to the Council's own provision at the following locations: Brechin Library, Montrose Museum, The Meffan Museum, Forfar, Kirriemuir Gateway to the Glens Museum, Carnoustie Library and Monifieth Library.

- Visitor information provision to be moved to Brechin Library as of 1 November 2014, and be managed by Angus Council staff.
- A good quality PC and colour printer procured for every tourist information point so that staff can print out useful information for visitors from Angus Council and other websites.
- World Host Customer Training for Council staff at tourist information points, including local knowledge training.
- Work shadowing for Council staff at the Arbroath VisitScotland Information Centre to make staff aware of the most commonly asked questions and the resources available to them to answer these questions.
- Investigation into provision of information in different ways to visitors, such as digital touch screens in locations across Angus.

#### **4. CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 Visitor information is now available at Brechin Library using information and furniture moved from the Brechin VIC.
- 4.2 Following the previous report and discussions with colleagues in Leisure Services, it was decided that procuring a new PC for every tourist information location was not the most effective solution, largely due to the space an extra PC would take. Laptops or tablets were agreed as a better option. The provision of wifi in each location is being investigated. This process was also delayed as some work had to be done on establishing if our tourist information points were in the best place. There was the possibility that opening hours of libraries and museums would be reduced, which may have meant that alternative accommodation for tourist information would have to be investigated. However, under the new Angus Alive Trust, it would appear that this is not the case, and once approval is gained from those who are involved in the Trust, the procurement of equipment can go ahead.
- 4.3 The first session of World Host Customer Training was carried out in June, with 12 visitor facing staff undergoing the one day session with our in-house trainers. The feedback from this session was largely positive, and after some fine-tuning of the content resulting from this feedback, further sessions will be arranged later in the year to enable all visitor facing Council staff to undergo this training.
- 4.4 Now that the first session of World Host Customer Training has been completed, arrangements will be made for these members of staff to undertake work shadowing at the Arbroath VIC. This will be arranged before the end of the summer season.
- 4.4.1 Three digital information kiosks have been installed across Angus – at Peel Farm, Glamis Castle and the Carnoustie Hotel. These are interactive touchscreen kiosks giving information about visitor attractions, accommodation, places to eat etc. The supplier, ADS, has contracts with a number of areas in Scotland, including Fife, and are in negotiations with others. Visitor information about Angus is available on all kiosks across the ADS network giving us the advantage of Angus information being available elsewhere in Scotland. This is currently a pilot project for two years after which it will be reviewed and extended if it is successful.

#### **5. FUTURE PROGRESS**

- 5.1 World Host training will continue until all relevant Angus Council staff have undergone the training. In parallel to this, work will continue on providing the most effective equipment in the Council's tourist information points so that visitors can access the information they need, in the more relevant format for them. This will be accompanied by continued research into new and innovative ways of providing information, implementing these new ways where appropriate.

#### **6. STEAM**

- 6.1 STEAM figures measure the volume and value of tourism in Angus. In 2014, visitor days were up 6.5% from the previous year at 2,291,570. However, visitor numbers were only up 2.7% to 957,390. The economic impact of these visitors was up 10.1% to £201.75m. This means that our visitors are staying longer and spent significantly more than in 2013. Both the serviced and non-serviced accommodation sectors performed well, but day visitors were down by 1.7%.

#### **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**RICHARD STIFF  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**NOTE:** The following background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

Report 112/15 to Development and Enterprise Committee of 3 March 2015.

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