

Report

Report subject: Salisbury Tourist Information Centre and Tourism Special Events Policies

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 21st August 2006

Author: Jane Fry, Salisbury TIC Manager and Mary Pocock, Tourism Manager

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The policies for both the Salisbury Tourist Information Centre and the Tourism Special Events were last approved by members in 2000. These policies needed updating in line with changes to the services currently provided and are now attached at Appendix 1 and 2.
- 1.2 Salisbury Tourist Information Centre has won numerous prestigious awards in the past few years, including Best Tourist Information Centre in England in 1998 and 2004 and runner up in 2002. They have also won the South West prize on three occasions.

2.0 Recommendations

This policy will be taken to Management Team for final approval and the Planning and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the report and to make any recommendations to Management Team they feel necessary.

3.0 Implications

- **Financial** All activities shown in the policy are financed from within existing budgets
- **Legal** None
- **Human Rights** None
- **Personnel** None identified. If the need for increased accessibility were to lead to a proposal for extended opening hours, however, this would result in some impact on staff which would need to be dealt with via the usual channels.
- **Community Safety** None
- **Environmental** None
- **Council's Core Values** Promoting a thriving economy
- **Wards affected** All



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



Policy: Tourist Information Centre

Service Unit: Marketing, Economic Development and Tourism
Date: 26 June 2006

POLICY STATEMENT

The policy of the Tourist Information Centre is to provide an unrivalled information service to meet the needs of visitors to the region and local residents, which is accessible to all. The Tourist Information Centre will provide the following:

- Outstanding customer service
- Unbiased, up to date, and accurate information
- The widest possible range of services to meet the needs of all

The TIC will also work to maximise income generation from its activities, balanced against the need to provide an accessible visitor information service.

INTRODUCTION

The Tourist Information Centre (TIC) Service is part of Salisbury District Council's (SDC) Marketing, Economic Development and Tourism Unit (MED&T) and is delivered in the context of the following core values of Salisbury District Council:

- Excellent service
- Meeting local needs especially those of disadvantaged groups and individuals
- A thriving local economy
- Communicating, especially listening and responding
- Being open and honest, continually trying to improve and learn
- Working together with other public, private and voluntary sector organisations to develop a better, more sustainable district.

There are two TICs based in Salisbury, the main one is open year round and is located at the back of the Guildhall and the other, open between Easter and September, is based at the Salisbury Railway Station.

The service's main ambition is to operate networked TICs offering local, regional and national tourist information to visitors, businesses and local residents and, as a networked TIC, Salisbury must adhere to the national service standards as laid down by VisitBritain (VB).

Salisbury TIC supports the work of the Salisbury and Stonehenge Tourism Partnership (STP) by encouraging new membership and liaising with existing members and selling their products, wherever possible.

Salisbury TIC is nationally recognised as being at the forefront of tourist information services across the UK. As a multi award-winning centre, it is often asked for advice, benchmarking statistics and general best practise policies from other tourism organisations.

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE SERVICES

Information service

- Promote 'Salisbury & Stonehenge' as a premier destination to national and international visitors.
- Provide an enquiry service that meets identified needs for both visitors and residents.
- To provide clear, prominent, relevant and up-to-date displays throughout the TIC.
- Gather, store and provide up to date visitor information from the whole of Great Britain, using the National Reference Kit.
- Continue to develop and improve local and national tourism information and reference resources.
- Service customer enquiries through all communication channels including in person, via telephone, e-mail, fax and through www.visitsalisbury.com.
- Continue to support and develop the Destination Management System (DMS) in consultation with the Destination Management Partnership.

Accommodation booking service

- Salisbury TIC will provide an accommodation booking service in accordance with national guidelines.
- Bookings will be made to inspected accommodation only, as set down in the constitution of STP.

Retail

- Provide a gift shop stocking a range of quality products that meet the demand of visitors and residents.
- Ensure all staff are familiar with the products and know sales techniques to ensure maximum possible retail spend.
- Develop point of sale marketing, window dressing and eye-catching promotions to the interior and exterior of the TIC in order to attract and encourage increased sales and visitor footfall.
- Maximise revenue by selling tickets for events and theatres, buses and ferries, and investigate becoming rail appointed and other suitable opportunities.

Coach drivers' facilities

- Maintain and develop the Coach Drivers' Rest Room in Millstream Coach Park.
- Provide a regularly updated Coach Drivers' Guide.
- Employ a seasonal Coach Ambassador to welcome and advise coach drivers and tour operators.

BRANDING

- Continue to support National TIC branding.
- Ensure that the TIC is prominently signed and easy to recognise as a national service using VisitBritain's TIC network branding and logos.

ACCESSIBILITY AND OUT-OF-HOURS INFORMATION

- Access to the centre will be free of charge.
- Ensure suitable signposting is in place to direct both pedestrians and motorists from all reasonable approaches using approved signs wherever possible, in consultation with Forward Planning and Transportation.
- Ensure TIC services are easily accessible to all.
- Ensure opening hours are clearly displayed and meet customer demand wherever possible.
- Provide up-to-date out-of-hours information to assist visitors. This should be clearly visible from outside the TIC when it is closed and should include the following information:
 - TIC opening hours
 - Details of alternative TIC(s) where appropriate
 - Accommodation listing with out of hours contact telephone numbers for reservations
 - Local maps
 - Other local community, emergency and help services
- Provide an out-of-hours answering machine message giving essential information, and the opportunity for callers to leave a message. The answering machine will not be used as an alternative to personal telephone assistance during the TICs published opening hours.
- Provide an extended information and accommodation booking service using a suitable call centre supplier.

STAFF AND TRAINING

- Have at least one full-time member of staff on duty to provide tourist information and staff supervision throughout the agreed opening hours.
- Encourage the TIC Managers to attend appropriate national and regional meetings.
- Encourage all staff employed in the TIC to portray a professional image and wear appropriate clothing and insignia to identify themselves as being both members of staff and part of the official English TIC Network.
- Encourage the rotation of staff within the Tourism Unit to ensure maximum cover at all times.
- Advise the local Regional Tourist Board (RTB) and Destination Management Partnership (DMP) of any staff changes.
- Ensure staff are trained to the highest standards required to operate a networked TIC.
- Have at least one member of staff qualified with Certificate of Tourist Information Centre Competence (COTICC) or the TIC National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 or 3.
- Encourage where possible, all staff working in the TIC to attend all suitable and relevant training courses provided through the local RTB and district council.
- Ensure all new staff members are trained within the 'Welcome' family series of customer care training courses.
- Where appropriate, encourage staff to go on product knowledge or familiarisation visits and attend suitable TIC networking events.

- Where possible, seek regional and national accreditation through award schemes such as 'Excellence in England'.
- Encourage staff to become involved in tourism development work such as attending exhibitions and the publication of literature.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

- Provide statistics and information as requested by the local RTB.
- Provide the local RTB with timely and accurate information to allow for network publicity campaigns.
- Co-operate with local RTB on regional and national publicity campaigns and use any materials provided.
- Carry out an annual audit of TIC services and operations to ensure customer demand is met and income generation is maximised.
- Monitor and review the telephone call management system.

Revenue and sales turnover

- Regularly review income generating retail and sales operations, to include sales training for staff, stock control and product ranges.
- Maximise revenue from commissionable products and services such as accommodation bookings, tickets for events and theatre shows, bus and ferry tickets and blue badge guided walks.
- Develop and implement pro-active selling policy and skills in order to maximise revenue.
- Monitor and research retail trends in other UK TICs.
- Attend trade fairs and exhibitions to keep abreast of new products for the gift shop.

Financial reporting and record keeping

- Gather TIC financial information, throughput, enquiry records and associated services for research and benchmarking purposes and in line with district council policies and systems.
- Regularly monitor, analyse and review statistics and records.

Communication, consultation and PR

- Support tourism in the district by involving local businesses and other interested parties in the formulation of tourism policies through the work of STP.
- Regularly consult with a wide range of customers, trade suppliers, management, etc. on all development issues.
- Continue to improve communication and the sharing of information within MEDT and the members of STP.
- Continue to build on the high profile and local, regional and national awareness of the TICs through implementation of effective PR.
- Administer the STP official complaints procedure.

Policy: Tourism Special Events

Service Unit: Marketing, Economic Development and Tourism
Date: 07 August 2006

The Special Events service and budget is managed by the Marketing, Economic Development and Tourism Unit and the service is delivered in the context of the following core values of Salisbury District Council:

- Excellent service
- Meeting local needs especially those of disadvantaged groups and individuals
- A thriving local economy
- Working together with other public, private and voluntary sector organisations to develop a better, more sustainable district

Aim

The overall aim of the service is to:

“Encourage and support the growth of tourism and the resulting economic benefit through the co-ordination and encouragement of a tourism special events programme for visitors and residents”.

Objectives

1. To support and encourage local organisations in the provision of a wide range of tourism special events and to encourage the widest possible private and voluntary sector input into their provision.
2. To give specific priority to attracting, developing, providing and promoting a range of high quality free events in the district to complement the overall experience of visiting Salisbury and South Wiltshire.
3. To benefit the local economy through special events and entertainment by encouraging residents and visitors to use the district for shopping and entertainment purposes in preference to regional competitors.
4. To maximise the newsworthiness of an exciting events programme and to ensure maximum coverage in the national, regional and local media.
5. To use special events to attract short break visitors by developing itineraries and ‘packages’.
6. To ensure that the provision of special events service is responsive to market demands, new trends and customer desires.



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services

