

North Yorkshire Council

Executive Member Decision (Cllr. Derek Bastiman)

14 February 2024

Relocation of Harrogate Tourist Information Centre

Report of the Corporate Director [Community Development].

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the relocation of the Harrogate Tourist Information Centre to the Royal Pump Room Museum.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report outlines a proposal to relocate the existing Tourist Information Centre in Harrogate, to the Royal Pump Room Museum. This will enable longer, more reliable opening hours and reduce staffing demand.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in Harrogate is currently located at Royal Baths, Crescent Rd, Harrogate. The Royal Pump Room Museum is located at Crown Pl, Harrogate, approximately 150metres away. The Pump Room is well located close to a number of other tourist sites and to the town centre. Both sites are currently staffed by Visitor and Experience Assistants who works across these two venues in addition to The Mercer Art Gallery and Knaresborough Castle. It is challenging to provide adequate staffing cover across all sites within the current staff numbers available and there have been a number of occasions when staff have had to work alone and where sites have been closed due to a lack of staff to cover.
- 3.2 The TIC has experienced reduced numbers of visitors in recent years. This is in line with national trends and changes in the way customers access tourism information, with more use of digital content and mobile devices to access information. The centre typically attracted around 135,000 visitors pre-Covid in 2019, dropping to 68,000 last year.
- 3.3 Visitor insight data suggests that a large number of visitors visit both sites, with 65% of those visiting the Pump Room Museum also visiting the TIC on the same trip.
- 3.4 It is common in other parts of the County for TIC facilities to be located within visitor attractions, rather than at standalone sites. Craven Museum in Skipton recently underwent a major refurbishment and now incorporates both a TIC function and services for visitors alongside the museum front of house.

4.0 ASSESSMENT AND FINDINGS

- 4.1 An assessment of options has been undertaken and the preferred proposal is that the current Tourist Information Centre relocates to the Royal Pump Room Museum. This will enable more efficient use of staffing resources and reduce lone working.

- 4.2 There should be minimal impact on customers, the Royal Pump Room Museum is located a short distance away and the opening hours are similar, with slightly longer hours available at the Pump Room Museum.
- 4.3 The TIC in the Pump Room Museum will be staffed by the Visitor and Experience Assistants who work across the TIC and cultural sites in Harrogate, as is currently the case. The proposal is a more efficient use of resources, given the reducing number of visitors to TIC's and frees up the current building for alternative uses, with potential for additional income generation through letting the space for an alternative use.

5.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

- 5.1 The proposal has been discussed with affected staff who are supportive of the proposal.
- 5.2 The portfolio holder for Culture, Cllr. Simon Myers has been consulted and is supportive of this proposal.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Tourism contributes to supporting a strong economy – a key Council priority. The retention of a local TIC service in Harrogate supports the principles of locality working by providing local access and services.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Alternative options considered were:

Option one: No Change

- 7.2 To maintain the status quo was not considered an efficient use of resources and unless additional staffing resource were allocated would continue to result in difficulties in staffing leading to occasions when the site was closed at short notice and periods of lone working.

Option 2: close the site (and not relocate)

- 7.3 This is not recommended. Whilst visitor numbers are declining it is felt important to maintain access to the service to support tourism within the area and to provide services for those who are unable or prefer not to use digital services.

8.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

- 8.1 This proposal releases a building currently occupied by the TIC, which is owned by the Council. There is flexibility to seek an alternative use/tenant for the site which can generate additional income for the Council.
- 8.2 TIC services will continue to be maintained so there should be minimal impact on other services or organisations.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Currently NYC cover the costs of the service charges, energy supply, maintenance, waste collection, cleaning costs & rates for the unit. The annual cost of this provision (minus general maintenance other contingency costs) is £24,300.
- 9.2 The estimated rental value of the unit, should we vacate the TIC and lease the unit out to a third party, is between £30-40k per annum. There would be some one-off costs e.g. minor

refurbishment, marketing etc. associated with preparing to lease the property. As a Listed Building there would be no rates payable by the Council during any vacant period between tenants.

- 9.2 This proposal will utilise existing staff, so there is no saving on existing staffing budgets, however, in the event that the standalone TIC remained this would have resulted in a need for additional staffing resources to maintain reliable service and address lone working concerns.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 No implications.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 An Equalities impact screening has been undertaken. The Royal Pump Room Museum is an accessible venue and there are no impacts for people with protected characteristics. See Appendix A.

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 A climate change screening has been completed. This proposal does not warrant a full CCIA to be undertaken at this stage. The proposal will have a negligible impact on climate change. See Appendix B.

13.0 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 This proposal will improve the Tourist Information Service by co-locating with another visitor attraction. The ability to deploy staff in a more effective manner will also mean longer opening hours for visitors as below:

The TIC previously opened 10:00 – 16:00 Wednesday – Sunday

From April 2024 the TIC service based at the Royal Pump Room Museum will be open 09:30 – 17:00 Tuesday to Sunday

14.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 No direct implications.

15.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 This proposal reduces service risk. It provides for a more efficient way of operating and reduces the incidence of lone working for staff.

16.0 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1 No specific implications. The proposals have been discussed with affected staff who are supportive of the proposals.

17.0 ICT IMPLICATIONS

- 17.1 No implications.

18.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

18.1 No implications.

19.0 CONCLUSIONS

19.1 The relocation of the Harrogate TIC to the Royal Pump Room would result in no loss of service for customers, would enable services to be delivered in a more efficient way, and would result in a saving to the council of £24,300 from energy and service charge costs. There would also be opportunity to lease the unit externally, generating additional income for NYC.

20.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

20.1 To provide a more efficient model for the delivery of TIC services in Harrogate, taking into account reducing visitor numbers, changing patterns of use and the current level of staffing resource.

20.2 To provide savings efficiencies for NYC.

21.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- i) That the Executive Member approves the relocation of the Harrogate Tourist Information Service to the Royal Pump Room Museum.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Appendix A : Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B : Climate Change Impact Assessment

Nic Harne, Corporate Director (Community Development)

County Hall, Northallerton


26/01/24

Report Author – Danielle Daglan, Head of Culture and Archives

Report presenter – Danielle Daglan

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Initial equality impact assessment screening form			
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.			
Directorate	Community Development		
Service area	Culture, Leisure, Libraries and Archives		
Proposal being screened	Relocation of Harrogate TIC to the Royal Pump Room Museum.		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Jo Ireland – Assistant Director		
What are you proposing to do?	Relocate Harrogate TIC to the Royal Pump Room Museum. The Museum is accessible and approximately 150m from the current TIC site.		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	Reducing visitor numbers, more efficient use of staffing resources.		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No		
Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC's additional agreed characteristics As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? • Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? • Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt.			
Protected characteristic	Potential for adverse impact		Don't know/No info available
	Yes	No	
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Sex		X	
Race		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage or civil partnership		X	
People in rural areas		X	
People on a low income		X	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		X	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	No		

<p>Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts on how other organisations operate.</p>			
<p>Decision (Please tick one option)</p>	<p>EIA not relevant or proportionate:</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Continue to full EIA:</p>	
<p>Reason for decision</p>	<p>This relocation of the TIC service in Harrogate has minimal impact on equalities and those with protected characteristics.</p>			
<p>Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)</p>				
<p>Date</p>	<p>26./01/24</p>			

Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment (Form created August 2021)

The intention of this document is to help the council to gain an initial understanding of the impact of a project or decision on the environment. This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. Dependent on this initial assessment you may need to go on to complete a full Climate Change Impact Assessment. The final document will be published as part of the decision-making process.

If you have any additional queries, which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Title of proposal	Relocation of Harrogate TIC to the Royal Pump Room Museum.
Brief description of proposal	Relocation of Harrogate TIC to the Royal Pump Room Museum. This enables more efficient use of staffing resources and reduces lone working. The Royal Pump Room museum is accessible and is approximately 150m from the current TIC.
Directorate	Community Development
Service area	Culture, Leisure, Libraries and Archives
Lead officer	Jo Ireland: AD Culture, Leisure, Archives and Libraries
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	Danielle Daglan, Head of Culture and Archives


The chart below contains the main environmental factors to consider in your initial assessment – choose the appropriate option from the drop-down list for each one.

Remember to think about the following;

- Travel
- Construction
- Data storage
- Use of buildings
- Change of land use
- Opportunities for recycling and reuse

Environmental factor to consider	For the council	For the county	Overall
Greenhouse gas emissions	No effect on emissions	No Effect on emissions	No effect on emissions
Waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste
Water use	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage
Pollution (air, land, water, noise, light)	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution
Resilience to adverse weather/climate events (flooding, drought etc)	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience
Ecological effects (biodiversity, loss of habitat etc)	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology
Heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape

If any of these factors are likely to result in a negative or positive environmental impact then a full climate change impact assessment will be required. It is important that we capture information about both positive and negative impacts to aid the council in calculating its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Decision (Please tick one option)	Full CCIA not relevant or proportionate:	X	Continue to full CCIA:	
Reason for decision	The proposal represents a more efficient use of buildings and other resources. To relocate the TIC has minimal impact on climate change and does not warrant a full CCIA to be undertaken at this stage.			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)				
Date	26/01/24			