



Devizes Town Council

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Special Meeting **Community & Civic Resources** **Committee**

You are summonsed to attend a meeting of the Community & Civic Resources Committee at the following, place and date.

Date: 9 May 2023

Time: Immediately after the Recreation and Properties Meeting

Venue: The Assembly Room, Town Hall, St John's Street, Devizes

Enquiries: Town Hall - Tel: 01380 723333

The Town Mayor Councillor Corbett

Chairman: Councillor Nash

Councillors: Bridewell
Hopkins
Oliver
Tanner

Gay
Hoult
Rose

Geddes
Hunter
Stevens

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DISCLOSURE(S) OF INTEREST**

To receive any disclosure(s) of interest by a Councillor or an officer in matters to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with provisions of Sections 94 or 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the National Code of Local Government Conduct.

- 3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public attending the meeting will be allowed to ask questions, make a statement or address the Council upon a matter of concern to that person which is relevant to the Council. A time limit of 5 minutes per person will be permitted, but this may be extended at the

Chairman's discretion and a maximum period of 20 minutes has been allocated by the Council for this item of business

4. REPORT FOR DECISION – FUTURE ARRANGMENT FOR TOURISM PROMOTION IN WILTSHIRE

Recommendation

That the Committee reviews the concerns raised by Visit Wiltshire in relation to future funding for tourism in Wiltshire, by Wiltshire Council and what if any action it would wish to take.

Purpose of the Report

To better understand future changes in national and county funding for tourism in Wiltshire and possible implications following the changes.

Background

Officers have been contacted by the Chief Executive from Visit Wiltshire expressing his concerns about the implications for Wiltshire and Wiltshire destinations being taken out of the Government's new national structure for tourism as a result of Wiltshire Council announcing that they will be withdrawing their funding from Visit Wiltshire from 1 April 2024.

The Chief Executive is concerned that the impact of this is not just on Visit Wiltshire as a business. Devizes and Wiltshire as a destination, and all towns and destinations within it, will be taken off the tourism map of England.

This is of great concern to Wiltshire and will have a very significant impact on all destinations within Wiltshire, including Devizes and the surrounding area.

The introduction of accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) is the first step being undertaken by Government in the creation of a new national structure for tourism in England. LVEPs must be of at least county size and it is expected that there will be 35-40 of them, mostly covering single county geographies. Any county not having an accredited LVEP will not be able to access funding via Visit Britain/England (VB/VE) or The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and they won't be able to work with, engage with, or be promoted by, Visit Britain (VB) or Visit England (VE).

A key criterion for a county having an accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership is that all LVEPs must be public/private partnerships supported by public and private sector funding, withdrawing funding means that Wiltshire is no longer able to meet eligibility criteria to have an accredited LVEP. The reasons for why LVEPs must be public/private partnerships are set out in the De Bois Review of Destination Management Organisations in England, making complete sense and are widely supported.

If Wiltshire doesn't have an accredited LVEP, Wiltshire and destinations within Wiltshire, will be excluded from all VB/VE, and other 3rd party, activity. That means that Devizes and the surrounding area, other destinations across

the County, will cease to exist in VB and VE domestic and international marketing and promotional activities. Destinations will not be featured on VB/VE websites, in VB/VE marketing campaigns or promotional activities. They will not be included in VB/VE travel trade or travel press communication, so our destinations would no longer be able to host trade or press visits, or be included in travel trade or press comms. Our local businesses would not be able to benefit from VB/VE attending or supporting Wiltshire business and sector group events.

Without LVEP status we'd no longer be able to continue any of the good work we've achieved historically, marketing and distributing Devizes content via the national tourism agencies and their partners. And wouldn't benefit from the additional visits and spend they generate, for example Wiltshire benefitted from being included in VB's international campaign last year which generated £637m in additional spend.

As part of the new national structure there is a top tier 'Destination Development Partnership' (DDPs) being piloted in the North East. If the 3-year pilot goes well it is expected there will be 15-20 DDP and these will be strategic bodies that will work collaboratively with VB/VE on implementing the Government's National Tourism Recovery Plan, and who will be the vehicle for distribution Government funding. The current thinking is that DDPs will be created from a number of accredited LVEPs coming together to form a new partnership body. Any area, such as Wiltshire, not having an accredited LVEP, won't be able to be part of a nearby DDP, so will not be able to benefit from DDP budgets and resources or the support of VE/VB .

The 35-40 LVEP's will therefore form the backbone of the destination management structure for England's travel trade and provide the mechanism for distributing future visitor economy funding and resourcing. Unless Wiltshire is one of these, Wiltshire as a destination, including sub-destinations will disappear from all Visit Britain/ Visit England promotional activity, websites and social media, etc. In other words, we would cease to exist as a promoted destination.

The 3rd tier of the new national structure consists of any other tourism organisation – VB/VE have said they will in future only work with DDPs and LVEPs and will have no contact or engagement without these.

Visit Wiltshire understand the difficult funding pressures Wiltshire Council are under, and they had said previously that they will find it difficult to continue to support Visit Wiltshire after April 2024. But the Council had also said it is vital that Wiltshire has an accredited LVEP, so their announcement about ceasing funding has come as quite a shock.

It is known that Visit England have been delighted with the level of interest they've had at a county level, and that they expect most counties to submit LVEP applications. Visit Wiltshire sailed through the Expression of Interest stage in December, but VB/VE are now extremely concerned that Visit Wiltshire, as one of their previous 12 'Lead Destinations', are not now able to meet LVEP accreditation criteria. Such is the seriousness of the situation that

we have the Chief Executive of Visit England/Britain visiting Richard Clewer in May to explain the very serious implications for Wiltshire, Wiltshire destinations and Wiltshire's tourism and hospitality businesses not having an accredited LVEP.

Visit Wiltshire are asking for any help Devizes Town Council can offer in raising awareness of the seriousness of this situation, as they see it, with your Town, with Wiltshire Councillors, and our MP. We are also asked if Devizes Town Council will write to Richard Clewer directly asking if the funding decision can be looked at again.

Options Considered

The Committee needs to decide if it wishes to support Visit Wiltshire in seeking a change in policy and to support funding for a Local Visitor Economy Partnership in Wiltshire

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Officers are unaware of any financial or resource implication for the Town Council associated with this decision

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be considering this matter under its General Power of Competence

Environmental Implications

Officers are unaware of any environmental implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Officers are unaware of any risk implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.



TOWN CLERK