



Title of Report:	Tender - Provision of Visitor Information Services in The Glens
Committee Report Submitted To:	The Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	16th March 2021
For Decision or For Information	For Decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Promote our tourist offering locally and internationally
Outcome	Improve prosperity
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism and Recreation

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£20,000
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	n/a

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the provision of a Visitor Information Service in the Glens area.

2.0 Background

The Destination Management team manages six networked Visitor Information Centres (VICs) within the Borough: Ballycastle, Bushmills, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Portrush. It also manages one non-networked office, Rathlin Boathouse.

In addition to fulfilling the VIC remit on a year round opening basis, three out of the four centres offer front of house provision for other service areas within Council, namely, Roe Valley Arts Centre, Ballymoney Town Hall and Portnagree House in Ballycastle. Coleraine VIC acts as a reception for the Town Hall but does not provide front of house for any other Council Service.

Seasonal offices are also open from Easter to October at Bushmills, Portrush and Rathlin Boathouse. All offices are currently closed following government guidelines and staff are on furlough.

A gap exists in the provision of a visitor information service within the Glens. Council has addressed this in the past six years in the form of a service level agreement with an operator in the Glens. This contract will come to an end as of 31 March 2021.

The Glens is the gateway to the Borough and is situated along the Causeway Coastal Route. The visitor information service in the Glens is often the first touch point for many of our international visitors. As such, it offers more than visitor information from direct enquiries over the counter and via telephone/internet, it offers that personal, authentic and friendly welcome which enhances visitor satisfaction, encouraging longer stays, increased spend, repeat visits and a positive portrayal of what the destination has to offer visitors.

3.0 Requirements for Services

The tenderer must deliver the following services;

Opening Hours:

- March – June, September, October: Monday – Saturday 10am – 2pm.
- November: Monday – Saturday 10am to 1pm.
- July and August: Monday – Saturday 10am – 5pm, Sunday 12noon - 4pm.
- Closed December to End February.
- The Information Office should be open all bank and public holidays.

(With the exception of Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day)

3.1 Standards of Service

Provide a personal and impartial service at all times.

Stock and display free literature from relevant outside agencies/bodies of the destination.

Hold a reference manual for the use of visitors with details of all accommodation, places to eat, attractions etc. in the destination.

Respond to any telephone enquires within 5 rings, written and email enquiries within 24 hours.

3.2 Accommodation and experience booking service

The office will offer an accommodation and experience booking service for local tourism providers.

3.3 Staffing

Staff must participate in a relevant induction training programme and undertake any other training programmes as reasonably requested by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

3.4 Administration

The staff will record statistics on all enquiries and report on a monthly basis.

Subject to government restrictions in relation to Covid19

When the office cannot be physically opened to the public, a telephone and email service must be provided at a minimum during the listed opening hours.

Efforts must be made to make the office environment compliant with best practice in terms of minimising the risk for staff and visitors from Covid19.

4.0 Procurement Process

Following procedures detailed in the funding policy, Causeway Coast and Glens Council has invited quotations from experienced operators to provide 'Visitor Information Services' in the Glens. This service in the Glens will exist to promote the Causeway Coast and Glens as a holiday destination, communicating what it has to offer the holidaymaker/visitor with regard to accommodation, activities, events and attractions, and other tourism related products, as well as providing the warm welcome expected by visitors.

The procurement process for this appointment involved a public notice in 'The Chronicle' newspapers and via E-Sourcing NI and expressions of interest were sought. The terms of reference were issued and one company responded. The submission deadline was 12 noon Tuesday 23rd February 2021.

As with previous tenders for this service in the Glens, the maximum budget allocated to this is £20,000.

The following company submitted documentation:

- The Glens of Antrim Historical Society

Summary

	Score	Rank
Glens of Antrim Historical Society	100	1st

5.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approves:

Appointment of The Glens of Antrim Historical Society as the Causeway Coast and Glens Council's preferred candidate for the provision of Visitor Information Services in the Glens, subject to clarification of all requested information and agreement on 'the terms and conditions of contract'.

This appointment would be for a twelve month period commencing on 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 with the option to extend for two further periods of 12 months each from 1st April, subject to satisfactory performance and council budgets.