

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

---

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 10 JANUARY 2017  
 title: GENERAL REPORT  
 submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
 principal author: ADRIAN HARPER, HEAD OF ENGINEERING SERVICES  
 COLIN WINTERBOTTOM  
 COMMUNITY LEISURE AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER  
 TOM PRIDMORE, TOURISM AND EVENTS OFFICER

## 1 PURPOSE

To update of developments within the Engineering, Leisure, and Tourism sections.

## 2 ENGINEERING SERVICES

### 2.1 CCTV MONITORING

The existing monitoring contract was serviced by Profile Security Services Ltd. The original contract was let as part of a larger contract including Preston, Blackburn, and Burnley. The contract was for 2 years and there was an extension until 30 November 2016.

Officers have carried out a procurement exercise for a new supplier solely for RVBC, as the other districts are forming the new Hub run by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. The successful contractor is, once again, Profile Security Services. The new contract will again be for 2 years with a possible extension for the sum of £87k.

### 2.2 RELIGIOUS AND STATE PROCESSION IN RIBBLE VALLEY

Previously, events such as the above have been referred to the Council's Safety Advisory Group and the decision has been made that, to enable processions to take place safely, the council would draw up a Town and Police Clauses Closure and stipulate a high-vis car at the front and the back to ensure safety. This has been happening for the last year or so.

It appears now that surrounding districts, including Burnley, are no longer allowing this arrangement. Instead, they are insisting on a Traffic Regulation Order drawn up by the Highway Authority LCC at the cost of approx. £1000.

Ribble Valley will continue to use the original procedure until it is directed to do otherwise by either the Police or the Highway Authority.

This is to inform members that this change is on the horizon and, if it were introduced, very few of the historical processions would continue to take place in the Ribble Valley.

## 3 CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

### 3.1 RIBBLESDALE POOL

For the duration of the Pool closure period, the outdoor Artificial and grass pitches will continue to be available to members of the public, and staff will be in attendance during evenings and weekends to facilitate access and supervise use, as normal.

The changing pavilion will also be available for toilets and changing provision, if required.

Customers are being advised of alternative arrangements for swimming at pools in neighbouring authorities, and the Dolphins Swimming Club will be holding sessions at Stonyhurst College. Re-enrolments for children attending the Council's internal lesson programme have been arranged to commence from 20 February, when the Pool will have reopened.

In addition to the undertaking of maintenance work and cleaning of the poolside surrounds, pool tanks, and plantroom, staff will be undertaking project work including the review of Risk Assessments, Health and Safety Policy, reorganisation of the internal lesson programme, and the re-writing of lesson plans for both school and internal lessons. It will also present an opportunity to train staff on the till management system, and revise the procedures relating to aspects of customer service. The operation is challenged with increasing participation in aquatics as set out within the business plan on which Sport England agreed to contribute towards the improvement scheme; so the staff will review the programming and associated marketing to help achieve these targets when the Pool reopens.

### 3.2 PLATFORM GALLERY

The Christmas exhibition 'Northern Star' comes to an end after the Christmas holiday period, and will be replaced by the Ribble Valley Craft Open. The subsequent exhibition programme is being reviewed as the past year is evaluated in terms of the extent to which the four exhibitions have met the desired outcomes. This evaluation process will help to determine the format of exhibitions going forward from April 2017.

## 4 TOURISM AND EVENTS

### 4.1 ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

The economic performance of Tourism is measured through a model called STEAM, the latest results of which have just been produced. Unfortunately the data is always more than a year in arrears and so 2015 is now available. The results, coordinated from research led by our destination management organisation 'Marketing Lancashire', demonstrate continued growth in the visitor economy. These results compare favourably with anecdotal feedback from selection of local tourism business owners who have expressed the view that this year, 2016, has been yet another successful year of growth in the visitor economy.

#### Headline Data for 2015 compared to 2014

- Total visitor number up 1.3%
- Total Visitor days up 2.1%
- Day visits Staying visitor up 3%
- Increase in non-serviced accommodation against a small loss of serviced accommodation

A summary of the 2015 position of the visitor economy is attached as an appendix. This sector is notoriously hard to measure, and more fundamentally, to define as to what constitutes tourism. The STEAM model is not an exact science and there is a view that, for example, areas like employment, and value, the published figures are a significant underestimate. Whilst perhaps not totally accurate, they nonetheless provide a useful 'year on year' comparator for performance.

## 4.2 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

In order to work most effectively, and to maximise limited resources, a number of Council-led partnerships, involving private sector tourism partners, are being developed. This means that knowledge and resources can be pooled, resulting in some really effective marketing activities.

- Ribble Valley Wedding Partnership

The Ribble Valley Wedding Heaven Partnership was initiated by the Council almost two years ago, to reflect the growth of, and interest in, the local wedding industry, and acknowledging its potential for new tourism. It is a partnership involving almost all of the licenced wedding venues along with many suppliers. The partnership recognises the spin off benefits of the wedding business for tourism in the wider economy, and the notable growth in demand for accommodation, with many visitors coming for the first time as a wedding guest and then returning for further holidays. The partnership is believed to be unique, the first of its kind in the country, where venues work together in this highly competitive market. Since its inception, the partnership has hosted wedding press visits and undertaken collaborative marketing and promotions. Most recently, following attendance promotional events in Manchester and Bolton, 'A One Night in Heaven' event was organised where the majority of venues opened simultaneously to allow new visitors to experience the area and visit a number of venues during one evening. This event was very successful, as was the first ever generic wedding fair hosted at the Grand, Clitheroe, and supported by almost all of the partnership members. In order to promote the area as the ultimate destination, the partnership has just produced a full colour brochure, of a quality which we believe reflects the product. Each venue paid for their part in a series of features which have been produced to a consistent design, in order to maintain the quality of the brochure, and also reflect the collaborative brand of the group. The brochure mirrors the quality of the existing website [www.ribbonvalleyweddingheaven.com](http://www.ribbonvalleyweddingheaven.com) which highlights venues and suppliers, and then social media promotes wedding-related events, and day to day news.

- Ribble Valley Food Heaven

With the amazing food offer in this locality being of such huge importance to tourism, there have been ongoing discussions as to the best way to work together to promote the area as a food destination. In conjunction with a University of Central Lancashire graduate, a new website is being created promoting Ribble Valley Food outlets, events and producers. Promotion on the website is linked to advertising packages available in the annual visitor guide (see below). The website is under construction but can be viewed at [www.ribbonvalleyfoodheaven.com](http://www.ribbonvalleyfoodheaven.com). It is designed to be a one stop shop for visitors seeking to experience the culinary delights of the area.

In conjunction with Marketing Lancashire, several press visits have been hosted in Ribble Valley, not least by a journalist from the Sunday Times which resulted in a most notable feature which described the area as '*England's answer to Tuscany*'

- Group Travel

Group travel continues to be a potential growth area for tourism development, and the Council's Group Travel Manual was relaunched at the National Leisure and Group Travel show in Birmingham in October. This was attended by group organisers, coach operators and journalists. The manual takes the form of a loose leaf pack, enabling it to be updated or reprinted at minimal cost. In terms of partnership working to further activity, there are a number of businesses that have expressed an interest in working collaboratively and, in conjunction with the Ribble Valley Tourism Association, we have plans to host a Group Travel business development workshop, potentially involving one of the UK's leading group travel experts. Again, by working more collaboratively, it is hoped to increase promotional activity, trade awareness, and subsequently, business.

#### 4.3 EXTERNAL EDUCATIONAL LIAISON

In support of helping young people development their skills, the Tourism and Events Officer continues to work closely with educational establishments, taking student placements and working with universities requiring consultancy style projects. This not only offers students 'real life' work experience, but provides valuable research data for the Council's tourism product development. Recently, a consultancy project by a student from the University of Central Lancashire has helped develop a new strategy on the use of social media for Ribble Valley tourism, whilst a team from Leeds Beckett University is currently evaluating the impact, value and potential of wedding tourism. Regular work experience participants also help with tourism promotions at different times of the year and this year, two 3-month marketing placements have been hosted from the International Business Academy in Denmark. All student placements provide valuable support for tourism development but moreover, bring new and fresh ideas.

#### 4.4 PROMOTIONS FOR 2017

The official Annual Discover Ribble Valley Visitor Guide is currently being prepared, with publication due for mid-January. The publication is produced by the Council in partnership with a private sector operator, which this year is Scott Dawson Advertising. The guide is self-financing from the sale of advertising and once again sales performance is healthy, with some new advertisers joining. As a result, the guide is likely to grow in size, once again.

The Tourism Officer is also working with the company called 'Room Book' which provides bedroom browsers for the majority of hotels in Ribble Valley, and indeed across the County. At this time of year, the Tourism Officer is also responding to a plethora of requests for editorial content and images for a variety of publications and websites which promote the area.

Finally, the official tourism website [www.visitribblevalley.co.uk](http://www.visitribblevalley.co.uk) is currently being reconstructed and the content refreshed, to make it more user-friendly and easy to navigate. It will be ready late January 2017.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The above have contributed to the wellbeing of the community, and enhanced the reputation of the Council.

ADRIAN HARPER  
HEAD OF ENGINEERING SERVICES

COLIN WINTERBOTTOM  
COMMUNITY LEISURE & SPORTS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

TOM PRIDMORE  
TOURISM AND EVENTS OFFICER

JOHN HEAP  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

For further information, please contact as follows:

Engineering Services - Adrian Harper 01200 414523

Sports & Leisure - Colin Winterbottom 01200 414588

Tourism – Tom Pridmore 01200 414496

Ref: Community Services 10.1.17 / AH / CW / TP / IW