



Visit Looe Working Group

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Committee: Full Council: 12th December 2023
Agenda Item: 67a
Date: 8.12.2023

1. Purpose

1.1 To consider the options outlined in the Visit Looe Local Government Resource Centre report.

2. Background/Information

At the Full Council meeting on the 8th August 2023 a working group was formed to conduct a review of the Visit Looe website. The working group consisting of Cllr Remington, Cllr Harwood, Cllr Holmes, the RFO and the Town Clerk have met fortnightly to conduct this review.

In October the Local Government Resource Centre (LGRC) was appointed to undertake an independent peer review and identify up to four options for future provision. The working group have considered this report and welcome the careful analysis of the Council's decision to establish a tourism website in 2020, the management of the website and options for future provision.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 The working group looked at all the options put forward by LGRC and debated the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Discussion focused on two distinct approaches, co-existence and partnership.
- 3.2 The co-existence approach would see the Council continue to run its own tourism website with the same range of information as currently presented on the Visit Looe website, including advertisements for tourism related businesses. This option would be best delivered by renewing the contract with Simpleview.
- 3.3 A partnership approach would mean the Council would maintain a tourism website but with a focus on representing the 'wow factor' of a visit to Looe (the home pages of [Home - Visit St Agnes](#) and [Visit Maldon District - Visit Maldon District](#) are good examples). Agreements could then need to be made with a range of partners, including Visit Cornwall and Welcome to Looe

and Polperro to link reciprocally with their sites where information about specific businesses would be available. This approach would not require the Simpleview platform but would require initial investment in a new Visit Looe website, probably with lower ongoing costs.

- 3.4 The Working group recognised that both a co-existence and partnership approach would require employing staff to properly manage and maintain a web presence.
- 3.5 During the course of the review the working group has looked at a wide range of Council managed or part-funded websites. One approach, the ‘Liskeard Model’ was highly rated as it brought together Council business, information for local people and visitor information under one umbrella website [Liskeard shopping, business & people: Your Liskeard, Cornwall](#)
- 3.6 The tables below summarise website set up costs and other additional set up costs. The full costs of establishing and running Visit Looe and the income generated is detailed on page 6 of the LGRC report.

Website set up costs		
15,740	Website set up costs	2020/21
4,165	Accommodation booking module	2022/23
19,905	Total	

Other set up costs		
2,050	branding	2020/21
10,207	PR, equipment, Google/Facebook	2021/22
12,257	Total	

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 That if the Council wishes to continue to provide a tourism website there should be an acknowledgement that the Council is providing a service to its community. There should be no expectation of income with any advertisers having equal status and low-cost or free access.
- 4.2 That if the Council were to decide to end the contract with Simpleview it should seek to extend its current contract until September 2024 to meet its obligations to advertising members and allow for a smooth transition.
- 4.3 The Working Group found that there were advantages and disadvantages with each option proposed by LGRC. One Councillor favoured option 4b but the recommendation of the majority of the three Councillors is a co-existence model based on Option 4a. This would mean,
- renewing the contract with Simpleview
 - exploring and costing repurposing the Council’s existing site to provide three distinct routes for information, ‘The Council’, ‘Your Looe’ and ‘Visit Looe’
 - Exploring the merits of adopting a simpler URL looe.gov.uk to improve accessibility
 - Employing staff or contracting with a third party to ensure the website is properly resourced with skilled and experienced personnel.