

CULTURE RECREATION & TOURISM CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 36

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: The VisitBrighton Greeter Scheme
Date of Meeting: 15th September 2009
Report of: Director of Culture & Enterprise
Contact Officer: Name: Liz Brand Tel: 29-2606
E-mail: Liz.brand@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The 2008 Tourism Strategy makes a specific recommendation for the implementation of a Greeter Scheme. Specifically the scheme would improve visitor experience, improve visitor welcome, engage local people in the benefits of tourism and increase take-up of local public transport.
- 1.2 Introducing the scheme to the City supports the objective 'Protecting the environment while growing the economy' from the City Council's Corporate Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the launch of the VisitBrighton Greeter Scheme on 2nd October 2009.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Destination Manager has researched the viability of bringing the scheme to the city and carried out extensive research into similar programs worldwide. Brighton will be the first city in the UK to host such a scheme.
- 3.2 Consultation has also been taken with the Global Greeter Network in order to ensure the VisitBrighton Greeter Scheme complies with the standards and code of conduct laid down by existing global schemes.
- 3.3 The logo has been designed in the style of the existing VisitBrighton logo in order to maintain brand consistency and align the Greeter Scheme with VisitBrighton in the mind of the visitor (see Appendix 1).
- 3.4 A channel web site to the main VisitBrighton web site is currently under construction (www.visitbrighon.com/greeters) with New Mind, which will

enable the visitor to be able to find out about the scheme, book a 'Greet' and leave feedback following a 'Greet'. In addition potential 'Greeters' will be able to apply for a volunteer position. The planned 'go live' date is 2nd October 2009 (see Appendix 2 for screen shots of work in progress).

- 3.5 Following discussions with the Global Greeter Network (administered by New York), Chicago, Kent, Houston and Adelaide Greeter schemes, a policy document has been written, closely following guidelines for Greeters to abide by (See Appendix 3).
- 3.6 Discussions are still ongoing with Brighton & Hove Buses to maximise the impact of the 'Greetings' on public transport.
- 3.7 Visitors will apply for a greet on line at www.visitbrighton.com/greeters, the request will then be cascaded out via e-mail to our volunteers, giving the time, date and interests of the proposed greet. Our volunteers will then respond, if they are happy to carry out the greet, and details of the visitors will then be passed onto them. The Greeter will reconfirm the meeting place and time to the visitors by phoning them the day before. They will meet at the Visitor Information Centre at the prearranged time before setting off on their greet.

Volunteers -

- 3.8 Following the initial Cabinet report in February 2009 and the subsequent PR generated (City News, The Argus, BBC TV, BBC Radio) 14 Greeter volunteers have shown their interest in being part of the scheme.
- 3.9 A reception was held on August 5th by The Right Worshipful the Mayor of The City of Brighton & Hove, Councillor Ann Norman, to acknowledge their interest and invite the volunteers to formally apply to the scheme.
- 3.10 Subsequent interviews and familiarisation days will take place for the volunteers in order to assess their suitability for the role.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Extensive consultation has been taken with other destinations who have Greeter schemes currently in existence, and the Global Greeter Network. This consultation will continue up until the launch of the scheme, with guest attendance at the Global Greeter Conference in September.
- 4.2 Consultation has also been entered into with a variety of volunteer sources, including John Cooper, Volunteer and Training Manager Royal Pavilion & Museums and the Federation For Disabled People in the city.
- 4.3 Feedback from local business has been positive and the impact of the Greeter Scheme has been welcomed by VisitBrighton partners and groups such as the Brighton & Hove Hotels Association.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 “It is expected that the costs of setting up the Greeter scheme – costs relating to the website, logo, clothing and staff time associated with the familiarisation day - will be met by a LABGI funding allocation of £11k. Thereafter it is hoped that the running of the scheme, in the format described in the report, would be cost free for the authority as it would be administered by volunteers. However, should there be a desire to develop the scheme further, extra funding would need to be sought.”

Finance Officer Consulted: Peter Francis

Date: 12th August

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The policy document (Appendix 3) contains provisions to ensure that greets are conducted safely, both from the point of view of the Greeter and the visitors. It also contains paragraphs to ensure that the Greeter Scheme identity and badge are not misused.

Greeters will be covered by the Council’s public liability insurance provided that they comply with the policy document, which makes this clear. The document also provides that the Council may remove Greeters or refuse applications from potential Greeters if this action would be justified in the interests of the Greeter Scheme.

The policy document has been kept informal to reflect that participation in the Greeter Scheme is a voluntary arrangement and not a contract of employment.

Lawyer Consulted: Carl Hearsom

Date: 11 August 09

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The Greeter Scheme EIA forms part of the VisitBrighton Sales and Marketing EIA, due to be published in September.

Equalities Office Consulted: Maureen Passmore Date: 4th August 09

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The 2008 Refreshed Strategy for the Visitor Economy makes recommendations to engage visitors in responsible behaviour when in the city. The Greeter scheme will aid visitors in their choices such as mode of transport, impact of cultural resources, relationships with local people and resources, use and selection of operators and businesses, and fundamentally to promote the city as a place where responsible behaviour is encouraged.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The Greeter scheme will provide a positive visible presence in the city. The Greeters will be easily identifiable due to branded clothing which will be a reassuring presence to visitors, increasing the perception that the city is a safe and welcoming place for visitors and residents alike.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The greeters will abide by the policy document (see app 3) which is based upon the Global Greeter Network Standards in order to protect greeters and ensure their safety at all times. The Greets will depart from and return to the Visitor Information Centre ensuring the greeter and visitors check in and out with staff. Greeters will also agree to abide by the authority's health and safety policy.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 Protect the environment while growing the economy. By agreeing to launch a 'Greeter Scheme', in line with the 2008 Refreshed Strategy for the Visitor Economy, and joining the Global Greeter Network, this will enhance the visitor experience in the city and open up a new marketing channel to attract more visitors to the city. The scheme will bring together visitors and residents in a dynamic way and fosters understanding from both sides. Brighton & Hove will be the only city in the UK to have the scheme, reinforcing the city as a unique and cultural destination.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 There are none.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 In order to continue to develop the 'destination brand' for Brighton & Hove, the launch and implementation of the Greeter Scheme will provide a framework for progressing the 2008 Refreshed Strategy for the Visitor Economy, whilst working closely with the city's key priorities.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Example of logo
2. Screen Shots of website under construction
3. Policy Document

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None.

Background Documents

1. None.

