

CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 24

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: *The VisitBrighton Greeter Scheme*
Date of Meeting: 21 September 2010
Report of: Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise
Contact Officer: Name: Liz Brand Tel: 29-2602
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 improves visitor experience, improves visitor welcome, engages local people in the benefits of Tourism and seeks to 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 the Cabinet Member notes the success achieved by the Greeter Scheme one year on, and agrees to introduce the 'InstaGreeter' pilot.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 A 'Greeter Scheme' is a voluntary scheme which welcomes visitors to the city in a unique way, by recruiting local residents who are passionate and knowledgeable about the city to volunteer and conduct free tours.
- 3.2 The scheme has involved VisitBrighton recruiting enthusiastic, friendly, and city knowledgeable residents who volunteer their time and expertise to welcome visitors by way of a walking tour, in groups of 6 or less.
- 3.3 Visitors access details of the scheme on www.visitbrighton.com/greeters, and book the 'Greet' before they arrive in the city. Tours are typically 2-4 hours and start at the Visitor Information Centre. This has also enabled us to make visitors more aware of the service the centre provides.
- 3.4 Our 'Greeters' prepare the tour and areas to explore based upon the interests of the visitor, or areas of the city they are knowledgeable and passionate about. This service is not designed to replace the 'Blue Badge Tours' provided by qualified and experienced guides, but has proven to enhance the welcome in the

city by using these knowledgeable and friendly ambassadors. We actively seek to encourage the visitors to use the blue badge tours to access their detailed expertise on the city.

- 3.5 There are many advantages of this scheme for visitors as well as for the city. For example schemes such as these seek to promote use of public transport by visitors, spread the spending power of visitors into local neighbourhoods and allow residents to show their pride for the place in which they live.
- 3.6 The next phase is for the scheme will be to launch the 'InstaGreeter' pilot in the Visitor Information Centre.

The 'InstaGreeter' works with the same principles as a regular 'greet' but has the added advantage of being available on the day for visitors and requires no pre booking. During the summer months we aim to have Greeters on hand at peak times in the Visitor Information Centre to take visitors on scheduled 45 minute walks around the City at various times during the day.

- 3.7 Following the launch of the scheme on October 2nd 2009 we now have:

- Recruited 12 volunteer greeters
- Launched www.visitbrighton.com/greeters
- Joined and become an active part of the Global Greeter Network
- Generated PR for the City through local and national press, radio and TV
- 45 Greet requests through Visitbrighton.com
- Volunteer greeters assisting in administering the scheme
- Feedback showing average satisfaction score of 9.7
- Launched a pilot of the 'InstaGreeter' (walks available from the VIC on the day without the need to pre-book)

- 3.8 Comments from those who have experienced a VisitBrighton greet:

"I don't recall enjoying an activity this much ever. Three cheers!"

"I think meeting a 'real' local who's doing it as a volunteer has a lot of plus points"

"It was a most enjoyable morning and was everything I had hoped for. My Greeter was very knowledgeable and tailored the morning to suit me and coped with my disability very well and made me feel "normal". 100% brilliant thank you"

"Before this, all I knew about Brighton and where it was, it is near the sea. Nothing more than that. Now it makes me feel like going back again in Summer. It has got so much more to do. One day is never enough!"

"My Greeter brought the place alive, and it was much more fun than if I'd been taking myself around with a book."

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 VisitBrighton Greeters have become an integral part of the Global Greeter Network and as such we are being consulted by numerous other UK destinations to give advice on setting up schemes around the country.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There was a LABGI funded allocation of £11k which met the set up costs of the Greeter scheme. Subsequently, the service has been provided and administered by volunteers, at no cost to the council.
- 5.2 If the scheme is extended, any further volunteers will be trained by the Destination Manager and met within existing resources.

Finance Officer Consulted: Peter Francis

Date: 02/08/10

Legal Implications:

- 5.3 The legal implications of setting up a Greeter Scheme were considered at the time that it was introduced. There are no new legal implications arising from the extension of the scheme set out in this report.

Lawyer consulted: Carl Hearsum

Date: 02/08/10

Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 Both the regular Greeter Scheme and the InstaGreeter seek to encourage visitors and volunteer Greeters from all walks of life and as such has formed a key part of the VisitBrighton Sales and marketing EIA, published in September 2009.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 The 2008 Refreshed Strategy for the Visitor Economy makes recommendations to engage visitors in responsible behaviour when in the city. The Greeter scheme and InstaGreeter aids 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 promotes the city as a place where responsible behaviour is encouraged.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.6 The Greeter scheme and InstaGreeter provide a positive visible presence in the city. The Greeters are easily identifiable due to their branded clothing and ID badges which give a reassuring presence to visitors. This increases the perception that the city is a safe and welcoming place for visitors and residents alike.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.10 All of our Greeters abide by their original policy document, based upon the Global Greeter Network Standards, Brighton & Hove City Council Health & Safety Policy and Single Equalities Scheme. These standards are upheld regardless of whether the Greeter is carrying out a regular Greet or an InstaGreet.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.11 Protect the environment while growing the economy. By noting the successes of 'Greeter Scheme', one year on in line with the 2008 Refreshed Strategy for the Visitor Economy, becoming an integral part of the Global Greeter Network, and moving forward with the InstaGreeter pilot, this enhances the visitor experience in the city and has opened up new marketing channels to attract more visitors to the city. The scheme has brought together visitors and residents in a dynamic way and fosters understanding from both sides. Brighton & Hove has been the first UK City to introduce a Greeter scheme and will be the first to open up an InstaGreeter programme, 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 continuation of the Greeter Scheme and the launch of the InstaGreeter 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:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None