



Visit Bradford Tourism Review

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1 Introduction

In April 2016, The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council commissioned TEAM Tourism Consulting to develop a Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the district. This DMP provides the framework for the development and promotion of the visitor economy across the area.

TEAM Tourism Consulting was also commissioned to review BDMC's Tourism Service. The aim of this review was to provide a basis for the future development and operation of the Tourism Service, within the context of three key drivers:

1. The Destination Management Plan, which identifies challenges and a forward strategy for the visitor economy
2. Changes in the way consumers now access information with the widespread use of smartphones, travel review sites and online hotel booking agencies for example.
3. A challenging spending framework for BDMC, with a need to reduce overall spend by £172,000 by 2017/18.

This review looks at:

- Current service provision in terms of:
 - Marketing and promotional activity delivered by the Tourism Service
 - Operation of the four Bradford District VICs.
- Potential future delivery options in terms of VICs and marketing

2 Current Visit Bradford Services

2.1 Visitor Information Centres

Bradford MDC currently operates four Visitor Information Centres (VICs) in Bradford, Haworth Ilkley and Saltaire. These are open year round (see appendix 1 for an overview of current VIC services).

The following table provides an overview of the relative performance and costs of each VIC.

| Costs, income and cost ratios | | | | | |
|---|----------|---------|--------|----------|----------|
| | Bradford | Haworth | Ilkley | Saltaire | All VICs |
| Number of visits | 51,332 | 69,254 | 75,726 | 29,669 | 225,981 |
| Number of other enquiries (telephone, email etc.) | 20,141 | 3,551 | 2,436 | 4,189 | 30,317 |
| Net costs (£k) ¹ | 71.2 | 101.4 | 56.7 | 85.7 | 315 |
| Estimated income ² (£k) | 11.9 | 19 | 24.3 | 8.9 | 64.1 |
| Cost per enquiry (inc. tel. and email) / visit | £1.00 | £1.39 | £0.73 | £2.53 | £1.23 |
| Cost per visit | £1.39 | £1.46 | £0.75 | £2.89 | £1.39 |
| Net income per visit | £0.23 | £0.27 | £0.32 | £0.30 | £0.28 |

Notes:

1. Source: Bradford MDC. Net cost includes staff costs, rents at Haworth (£11k) and Saltaire (£13.8k) and costs on Epos maintenance, uniform, stationery, computer costs, PRS licence and PPL Licence and stock
2. Based on sales figures and estimated profit margins. Margins differ across different goods and services. Averages from 2014 - 2016 have been applied to 2015/16

Key points in relation to the performance of the VICs are:

- They are dealing with approximately 225,000 visits.
- Ilkley is the busiest VIC in terms of visits. Bradford deals with the most telephone and email enquiries servicing brochure requests as a result of advertising campaigns
- Haworth and Saltaire are estimated to be dealing with higher proportions of 'tourists' (as opposed to residents of the area). They are the most seasonal TICs with more noticeable peaks and troughs in activity. Bradford and Ilkley are less seasonal and more likely to be used by local residents.
- In net terms, Haworth and Saltaire are the most expensive VICs to run.
- Ilkley is the cheapest VIC to run and the most cost effective relative to the number of visits. Ilkley and Haworth generate the most income – much of Ilkley's is from ticket sales for the King's Hall.

Other points in relation to the VICs:

- Bradford District's VIC operations are mature, with many staff having been in post for a long time.
- All four VICs are well located in their respective destinations – the exception is probably Saltaire which, in the context of its location in Salt's Mill, is slightly off the

beaten track. Bradford VIC, while in a good city centre location, does not have a particularly prominent position.

- In terms of decor and condition, all VICs (with the exception of Saltaire) are 'fit for purpose' but could benefit from some improvement. They have a 'traditional' feel with discrete retail, brochure and counter areas. Saltaire is the exception – it is in the best condition and the VIC with the most character and, in terms of layout, has an 'open' feel. Bradford has recently refreshed its retail offer and increased its appeal.
- There is little sense in the displays that the VICs are proactively selling other parts of the district or the attractions outside their immediate areas – though all allocate a significant proportion of space to displaying brochures for other parts of the UK.
- There is no sense that the VICs are 'telling the story' of their location or adding to the sense of place or civic pride.
- The retail offer of all VICs is good and targeted at their specific audiences with a range of goods at different price points. One issue is an excess of slow moving goods (i.e. goods which are not selling quickly but where the VIC has significant stocks).
- All VICs are of an adequate size but do not really have spare space to enable extended commercial opportunities (e.g. a coffee shop or increased retail functions).

2.2 Other Visit Bradford activities

VisitBradford delivers a number of marketing related services that also provide visitor information:

- **Website.** The VisitBradford website has plenty of strong images and positive messages, grouped in themes. The Destination Management System costs £12,500 per year to run, via NVG. This includes the website, a full content management system, e-news facility and consumer database.

Bradford is promoted on other websites via the DMS or through content supplied by the marketing team. For example it is featured on partner sites such as the Welcome to Yorkshire website and VisitEngland.

- **Digital Marketing and Social Media:** There is no specific budget for digital marketing, but VisitBradford works hard to gain traction in the digital sphere, particularly on social media and content provision on third party sites. It has around 11.2k followers on Twitter and provides regular updates on events, retweeting relevant content and photos. It has over 5,500 Facebook 'Likes'.

In terms of review sites, VisitBradford is featured on **Trip Advisor** webpages but is not active in responding to enquiries that are posted on the site – though there are some regular contributors who deal with most questions. VisitBradford has engaged with other sites such as www.Toptourist.com and VisitEngland's Twitter campaign.

- **Print:** The main guide 'Visit Bradford and District' is the 'inspirational' piece, distributed widely via Carrier Direct mainly outside the district via other TICs and as the fulfilment piece for specific campaigns such as via Bitesize Britain. 20,000 are produced and £4,000 of advertising income covers the costs of production.

The 'Discover' series of leaflets are produced for the four distinct areas of the district (Bradford, Haworth, Ilkley, and Saltaire). They seek to encourage visitors to spend longer and explore further while in the area, with strong messages and photos. Distribution is however a challenge, with little engagement from tourism businesses in the distribution of these guides locally. Approximately 10-15,000 of each are produced each year.

- **PR.** PR is out-sourced to a specialist PR agency which specialises in tourism and therefore has national travel contacts and can successfully organise journalist visits from national media. It is also used on specialist projects such as the Curry Capital.
- **Campaign Activity.** VisitBradford undertakes some advertising and campaign activity. This has included:
 - Challenge Fund campaign
 - Familiarisation trips including china travel trade
 - Food and Drink campaign
 - Poster campaigns at Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield and Bradford Foster Square.
 - Various adverts – e.g. Metro, Go Yorkshire
 - Christmas shopping campaign with Broadway Shopping Centre

Planned activity includes an advertising campaign at Leeds Bradford Airport

2.3 The Current Budget

The current tourism budget is as follows:

| | Net cost / Council Contribution |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Visit Bradford Officers x 3 | 130,500 |
| VICs | |
| Haworth VIC | 95,800 |
| Bradford VIC | 65,600 |
| Saltaire VIC | 80,100 |
| Ilkley VIC | 51,100 |
| VIC Shared costs* | 22,200 |
| Total VIC | 314,800 |
| Marketing | |
| Print | 10,000 |
| Web / DMS | 12,500 |
| PR | 10,000 |
| Campaigns / advertising / projects | 36,500 |
| Total Marketing | 69,000 |
| Total Budget (2016/17) | 514,300 |

3 Market Trends

The ways consumers access tourist related information continues to evolve. Some of the key trends include:

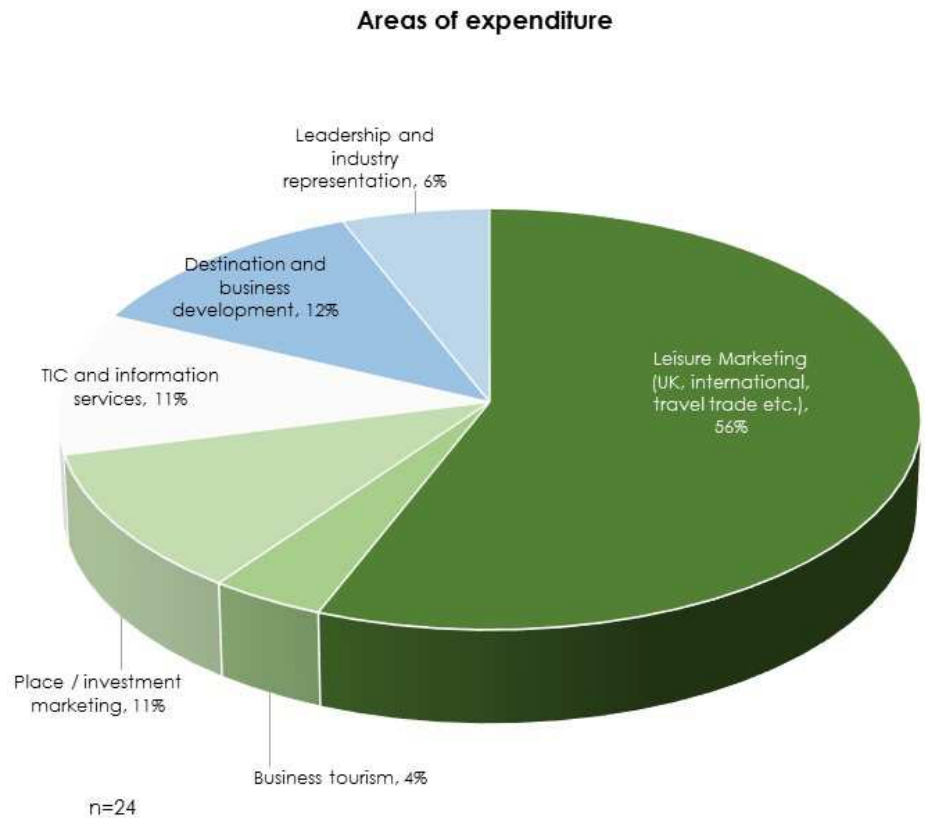
- At all stages of the 'customer journey', **digital content and channels are becoming increasingly important**. They are also blurring the differences between stages of the customer journey or merging them or even re-ordering them. **Consistent players** have emerged in the digital space in the UK. For example, Google is a trusted player, used throughout the travel process and among all target groups, and is particularly popular in the inspiration, conceptualisation, comparison, planning, and defining stages. Facebook, with both lovers and haters, is huge in the sharing stage. TripAdvisor is used widely by all target groups and has established itself as a key player in the comparative stage and used as a reference point.
- **Customer review** sites, in particular TripAdvisor, are becoming more important. Recent research indicates that 43% of British tourists are now using TripAdvisor for inspiration prior to booking a main holiday, with 23% posting reviews following a trip. Destinations can set up alerts to questions posed on TripAdvisor and can provide content on the site for their destination. There are also 'widgets' that destinations can incorporate into their own website pages, and this latter opportunity has been taken up by VisitBradford.
- Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare and other **social media sites** are providing a means of sharing word of mouth recommendations with very wide circles of 'friends' and networks. **YouTube** can be an effective means of inspiration – particularly when 'shared' or 'liked' on social media - and VisitBradford's 'You tube' channel has some good content – though limited views for some films.
- **Online booking** - consumers are increasingly booking accommodation through the growing number of third party websites that offer discounted accommodation and holidays such as LateRooms, lastminute.com, booking.com, Expedia, Trivago, and hotels.com, and taking advantage of special offers promoted through daily deals sites such as Groupon, Wowcher, Living Social, Travelzoo and Secret Escapes. Booking.com recently added Book Now for last minute bookings. **AirBnB** is offering a new channel of visitors wanting independent accommodation and it is now the 5th most popular travel website, achieving over 4 million visits per month
- **'Mobile first'**- smart phones and tablets are increasingly being used as the first point of contact for most communications, including tourism searches, enquiries and bookings. Wireless access on holiday and information in the right format will be key. Bookings will be more 'last minute'.
- **Google maps** and transport apps provide visitors with large amounts of information in their smartphones – but including content of relevance to visitors and checking its accuracy depends on local monitoring and input.

In terms of **destinations**, public sector cut backs have dramatically impacted on provision in tourism. A review of spending and operations of English destination management organisations undertaken by TEAM in 2016 indicated that under half now ran Visitor Information Centres. The table below shows the percentages of destinations involved in different types of tourism operation.

| Areas of Operation | |
|--|--------|
| | % DMOs |
| Domestic leisure (consumer) marketing | 92 |
| Business advice and support | 76 |
| Research | 71 |
| Travel trade marketing | 68 |
| Events development / support | 68 |
| International leisure (consumer) marketing | 66 |
| Other in-destination information provision | 66 |
| Destination development – interpretation, product development etc. | 66 |
| Sector Training | 55 |
| Tourism Conference | 50 |
| Tourism Awards scheme | 45 |
| TIC operation | 42 |
| Broader place and inward investment marketing | 39 |
| Convention Bureau / Business tourism – sales and marketing | 29 |

The average turnover of public sector organisations was £605k compared to £514 for Bradford – although on average 22% of income was coming from sources other than the local authority – such as membership, European funding etc

The chart right show the relative spending on different types of activity – so VIC and information services accounts for an average of 11% of spend – compared to 61% for BDMC. Marketing spend accounts for an average of 56%, compared to only 13% for BDMC.



4 Future Options

4.1 Considerations in future service development

Moving forward the budget for tourism services needs to move from its current level of £514,300 (which includes transitional funding) to £342,300 – a saving of £172,000.

As highlighted in section 1, reducing budgets is only one consideration. Delivery of the DMP and changes in consumer demands are other important considerations.

In reviewing activity and reducing budgets, consideration has been given to a number of factors:

- **Changes in consumer demand** – the advent of the internet and prevalence of smart phones provides visitors with many alternative sources of visitor information. The traditional role of VICs in sending out brochures and providing information on local hotels and attractions has largely been superseded by destination websites, online booking portals and review sites. There is still demand for printed maps and leaflets, but these can be distributed through various outlets, not only VICs.
- **Delivery of the Destination Management Plan** – the DMP outlines a potentially ambitious programme of activity. This will require a more dynamic approach to communicate more effectively across a number of different markets and resources, support events' programmes and product development, and engage more proactively with the tourism industry.

At £69k and one FTE, marketing and development resources for Bradford District are modest (individual attractions have larger budgets). While there is a strong case to increase marketing resources this might be difficult in the current Local Authority climate. However, savings from the fixed VIC costs could allow a **more proactive approach to marketing and visitor information provision** within the district – and one that is more in line with other English destinations.

- **Commercial opportunities** – There are some opportunities within the VICs to improve the retail offer and provide other commercial services (e.g. advertising, left luggage, and a Post Office counter in Haworth). However, these are limited and only likely to make a marginal contribution (up to 20-25% maximum) to running costs. They would need to be assessed against additional staff resources, space requirements and consumer demand.
- **Differences in VIC performance and potential** – the level of difference in current and future budgets will necessitate some form of VIC closure. Management statistics on Bradford MDC's four VICs highlight their differing performance. However, there are no statistics on the actual impact of VICs relative to each other or relative to

marketing services. Our assessment of the relative pros and cons of the four VICs is as follows:

| | Pros | Cons |
|----------|---|---|
| Bradford | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deals with the majority of back office enquiries Low property costs Destination with greatest growth potential / future VIC need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not identifiable as 'Welcome Centre' as corporate council branded. |
| Haworth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest number of 'tourist' visits and probably added value Good location | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leased property Most expensive to run |
| Ilkley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest number of visits Provides box office/booking services for King's Hall and Ilkley events Low property overheads Cheapest VIC to run | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily a local audience Ticket sales are a high proportion of sales |
| Saltaire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High proportion of 'tourist' visitors Sits in World Heritage Site Most distinctive and attractive VIC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor location within Saltaire Least visited VIC Most expensive per visit Leased property |

From a tourism perspective, as opposed to a community perspective, Haworth is the key VIC. It deals with the most visitor enquiries and probably adds the most value to the destination. Looking to the future Bradford, as a destination, has both significant needs and opportunities. A Bradford VIC could play an important role but its role would need to change from a traditional VIC to more of a welcome and interpretation centre.

- **Back office functions** – there is a danger when looking at VICs that one thinks of them only in terms of counter related services. VICs also undertaken a significant amount of 'back office' functions – dealing with email and telephone enquiries and theatre bookings, collating information and content for publication, managing social media etc. These are important functions but can potentially be undertaken in any location.
- **Partnership opportunities** - there may also be options to look at alternative arrangements for the delivery of simplified VIC services with a third party operating a VIC instead of, or in some form of partnership with, Bradford MDC. This model has worked well in some destinations (e.g. County Durham).
- **New ways of working** - at present the VICs are generally reactive and 'building centric'. Consumers are increasingly accessing information in different ways, and there are opportunities for new ways of working and providing visitor information in alternative ways to VICs. For example:
 - Within VICs, there is a substantial (almost dominant) retail element. An alternative is to focus more on creating '**Welcome Centres**' that provide a

strong sense of place and focus on selling the destination more through utilising a range of different media and imagery. This approach is particularly pertinent to the Bradford VIC but could apply to other centres as well.

- **'Taking Information to the Visitor'** – via pop-up or mobile VICs. A pop up stand, a table and some wi-fi connected tablets can provide a proactive visitor information service at events across the district (such as The 40s Weekend, Curry Festival) and in busy locations and sites through the year. This approach requires a different mind-set and more proactive approach. It would also require some flexibility in job descriptions and staffing arrangements.
- **Apps and a mobile enabled website** containing suggested itineraries and experiences can provide information in-destination.
- **Partner outlets** – there may be opportunities to provide information outlets within operators' properties (e.g. in attractions or retailers). This could feature tourist information literature and provide face-to-face advice. To be successful this approach would require on-going support from Bradford MDC in terms of providing training and support, branding, literature etc.

These activities would require some on-going revenue support mainly in terms of staff time - from both VisitBradford officers and VIC (or equivalent) staff.

4.2 Future Options

Looking to the future and predicted trends in smart phone and online information provision, there are a number of options that could be pursued – and which may have greater impact on the visitor economy. The differential between current and future budgets, and the limited commercial opportunities in VICs, means that Bradford MDC will need to reallocate some funding from VIC operations. The following table outlines four potential options.

| | Option 1: Keep 2 VICs | Option 2: Keep Haworth VIC | Option 3: Keep Bradford VIC | Option 4: No VICs |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Description | Keep Haworth and Bradford VICs at current opening and staffing levels. Close Ilkley and Saltaire VICs | Maintain Haworth at its current operational level (staff and opening hours) and close all other VICs | Maintain Bradford, refocusing it as a welcome and interpretation centre. (Maintain current opening hours and staff levels). Close all other VICs | Close all VICs. Re-invest the savings in alternative forms of information provision and enhanced marketing |
| Approx. cost saving | £142k | £213k | £244k | £315k |
| Potential impact on marketing and information budget | -£30k | +£41k | +£77k | +£143k |
| Advantages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps 2 VICs operational including Haworth (which has a relatively traditional audience and poor 4G, reducing likely use of digital alternatives). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains a VIC service in Haworth Allows for modest investment in alternative information provision and marketing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains a VIC service in Bradford and the core of the back office function. Allows for investment in alternative information provision and marketing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant opportunities to enhance marketing activity Can provide range of alternative info. provision across the district |
| Disadvantages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced marketing budget (by £30k) No budget for | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to cope with all the back office function at Haworth or a need to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach is based on Bradford's potential, not current, performance – | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back office function will be required in some form |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| | <p>alternative in-destination information provision</p> | <p>maintain a function in Bradford</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited funds available to invest in alternative information provision elsewhere or enhanced marketing | <p>in the short term this is not the most efficient option (in terms of cost per enquiry)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No VICs – can staff and expertise be retained for alternative information provision - such as pop-ups and coordination of delivery via other outlets? |
|--|---|---|---|---|

4.3 Option 1: Keep two VICs

Description and rationale

Option 1 is predicated on keeping two VICs open – Bradford and Haworth. The rationale behind this is that Haworth is the most important VIC in terms of the numbers of tourists it serves. Bradford, as a destination, has significant growth potential and a re-positioned VIC (as a welcome /interpretation centre) could be an important aspect of the longer term development of the visitor economy.

In contrast Ilkley is mainly providing a ticketing service to local residents, which, while important, is not servicing a visitor demand or adding significant value to the destination it serves. There may be opportunities for alternative arrangements in the town through a partnership approach. Saltaire is the least visited VIC and the most expensive per enquiry to run. Its location is not ideal.

However to maintain services in two VICs would have a significant impact on the destination marketing budget.

Potential Future Budget

| | £(k) |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Visit Bradford officers | 130.5 |
| VIC Services | 172.5* |
| Marketing/ other information services | 39.3 |
| Total | 342.3 |

* Based on current opening hours and staffing level in Haworth and Bradford

Potential Future Activities

| | |
|--|--|
| VICs | Operate two VICs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haworth VIC – current staffing and opening hours • Bradford – current staffing and opening hours • Reposition Bradford VIC as a welcome / interpretation centre (telling the Bradford 'story') |
| Alternative information provision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradford VIC to deal with back office functions for Saltaire and Ilkley • In destination print (see below) • Explore partner information outlets in Haworth, Saltaire and Ilkley (albeit financial support for these would be minimal). |
| Marketing | Budget for destination marketing would be reduced. Activities could include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of the website • Production of in-destination print – 4 guides • Social media campaign – primarily conducted in-house • PR activity – primarily conducted in-house • Minimal campaign and advertising activity |

4.4 Option 2: Keep Haworth VIC open

Description and rationale

Option 2 is predicated on keeping only Haworth open – on the basis that it is the most important VIC in terms of the levels of tourists it serves.

By closing three VICs this option also enables some investment in alternative information provision and additional marketing activity.

Potential Future Budget

| | £(k) |
|--|--------------|
| Visit Bradford officers | 130.5 |
| VIC Services | 101.4* |
| Marketing / other information services | 110.4 |
| Total | 342.3 |

* Based on current opening hours and staffing level in Haworth

Potential Future Activities

| | |
|--|--|
| VICs | Operate Haworth VIC – current staffing and opening hours |
| Alternative information provision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haworth VIC to deal with back office functions for Bradford, Saltaire and Ilkley OR maintain a back office function (1 to 1.5 FTE) in Bradford which deals with the district's enquiries, bookings, content management, and social media activity In destination print (see below) Development of a more mobile friendly website Refocus the position of Visitor Information Manager to have a more developmental role working with external partners in providing information, and explore alternative arrangements for face-to-face services. Some support (e.g. for brand materials) would potentially be available. |
| Marketing | <p>The size of the marketing budget will be partly dependent on back office arrangements and whether additional staff (beyond those currently in Haworth VIC) are required. Potential marketing activities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance and re-development of the website Production of in-destination print – 4 guides Social media campaign and PR activity – primarily conducted in-house (with possibly some external support) Some campaign and advertising activity but this is likely to be relatively ad-hoc and tactical |

4.5 Option 3: Keep Bradford VIC open

Description and rationale

Option 3 is predicated on keeping only Bradford VIC open – on the basis of its potential developmental role for Bradford. The VIC should be re-developed as a Welcome Centre ('This is Bradford') that utilises digital and presentational materials to tell the Bradford story, and generate local pride and a strong sense of the City's heritage.

By closing three VICs this option also enables some investment in alternative information provision and additional marketing activity.

Potential Future Budget

| | £(k) |
|--|--------------|
| Visit Bradford officers | 130.5 |
| VIC Services | 71.2* |
| Marketing / other information services | 140.6 |
| Total | 342.3 |

* Based on current opening hours and staffing level in Bradford

Potential Future Activities

| | |
|--|---|
| VICs | Operate Bradford VIC – current staffing and opening hours |
| Alternative information provision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bradford VIC to deal with back office functions for the district In destination print (see below) Development of a more mobile friendly website Refocus the position of Visitor Information Manger to have a more developmental role working with external partners in providing information, and explore alternative arrangements for face-to-face services across the district. Potentially some pop-up VIC services at events across the district |
| Marketing | <p>The size of the marketing budget will be partly dependent on the level of other information provision (e.g. pop-up and partner activity). Potential marketing activities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance and re-development of the website (including mobile friendly version) Production of in-destination print – 4 guides Social media campaign and PR activity – primarily conducted in-house (with some external support / expertise) Some campaign and advertising activity – primarily ad-hoc and tactical but the budget might allow for the development of a more proactive campaign with a dedicated budget (circa £30-40k) |

4.6 Option 4: No VICs

Description and rationale

Option 4 is predicated on closing all four VICs. This would enable investment in alternative information provision and significant additional marketing activity.

Potential Future Budget

| | £(k) |
|--|--------------|
| Visit Bradford officers | 130.5 |
| VIC Services | |
| Marketing / other information services | 211.8 |
| Total | 342.3 |

Potential Future Activities

| | |
|--|--|
| VICs | None |
| Alternative information provision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a back office function (1 to 1.5 FTE) which deals with the district's enquiries, bookings, content management, and social media activity • In destination print (see below) • Development of a more mobile friendly website • Refocus the position of Visitor Information Manager to have a more developmental role working with external partners in providing information, and explore alternative arrangements for face-to-face services. • Pop-up VIC services at events |
| Marketing | <p>Potential marketing activities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance and re-development of the website (including mobile friendly version) • Production of in-destination print – 4 guides • Social media campaign and PR activity – partly conducted in-house (with external support / expertise) • Enhanced campaign and advertising activity - development of 2-3 proactive campaign with dedicated budgets (circa £30-40k) – e.g. travel trade, 'Discover your Doorstep', and campaigns for 'active indulgents' and 'young explorers'. |

5 Recommendations

Our recommendation would be to pursue **option 3** – i.e. keeping a VIC presence in Bradford. The rationale for this is that:

- Bradford VIC effectively provides the majority of the back office function for the District. This will continue to be required in the future and it may be difficult in another VIC (e.g. Haworth) or require some staff provision if Bradford was to close.
- Bradford, as a destination, has significant growth potential and a re-positioned VIC could be an important aspect of the longer term development of the visitor economy.
- There is a potential opportunity to reduce cost in Bradford VIC through sharing of services with other leisure related functions in the City Hall (e.g. the Museum of Rugby League). This provides an opportunity to increase spend in other marketing and information services across the district.

However, pursuing option 3 should be predicated on re-positioning the centre as more of an interpretation centre (helping to tell Bradford's story) and welcome centre (helping to sell both the city and the wider area). If this is not realistic, then **option 4** (no VICs) would be our preferred option on the basis that it would maximise the available budget on marketing and information services across the district. These are likely to generate a greater return on investment than traditional VIC services (like options 1 and 2).

Appendix 1: VIC Services

| VIC | Opening and staffing | Description and notes |
|----------|--|---|
| Bradford | <p>Year round opening Monday – Saturday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April - September 10:00 - 17:00 October - March 10:00 - 16:00 <p>Staff hours per week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer: 112 hours Winter: 96 hours | <p>The VIC is located in a council building on Broadway. The VIC is spacious. Its retail offer has a bias towards gifts (both general and Bradford specific) which have proved to be a strong seller. Bradford VIC leads on information fulfilment (from marketing campaigns) – see below.</p> <p>The ambience and feel of the VIC is traditional and there is not a strong sense of place.</p> <p>Within the context of the city, the VIC is well located – close to both train stations and the City Park. However, in the context of current attractions in the city (particularly City Park and the National Media museum), it is slightly off the beaten track and not in a particularly visible location. The opening of the Broadway Shopping Centre nearby should be an opportunity and is likely to increase footfall in the area. It could have a positive impact on the retail offer and sales. There are no building charges for Bradford VIC</p> |
| Haworth | <p>Year round opening Monday – Sunday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April - September 10:00 - 17:00 October - March 10:00 - 16:00 <p>Staff hours per week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer: 147 hours Winter: 120 hours | <p>It is located on West Street in the heart of Haworth's tourism area. It is in a good location close to key car parks and the Brontë Parsonage Museum. It has a good frontage.</p> <p>The VIC is relatively narrow and small. Its retail offer includes both general and Brontë specific. The VIC is in good condition but traditional in its feel.</p> <p>There has been discusses on the potential of incorporating a Post Office Local counter. This would serve the whole of the village and may require a separate counter. There is space on the upper floor that has been used for exhibitions of local art and crafts in the past, and generated some revenue.</p> <p>Haworth VIC is leased at a cost of £11,000 per year. There are 7 years remaining on the lease.</p> |
| Ilkley | <p>Year round opening Monday – Saturday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April - September 9.30 - 16:30 October - March 10:00 - 16:00 | <p>Located in the Town Hall on Station Road, Ilkley VIC is close to the station and next to the King's Hall. It is a council owned property with no external lease charges. While close to the town centre it is slightly away from the main shopping area. This, combined with a lack of visible frontage, will reduce passing trade.</p> |

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| | <p>Staff hours per week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer: 105 hours <p>Winter: 90 hours</p> | <p>The VIC is relatively small but an acceptable size. The centre has a traditional feel. The retail offer specialises in walking related publications. Ticket sales for the King's Hall are a significant part of the centre's income (see below).</p> <p>It opens half an hour earlier than the other VICs to catch potential walkers before the departure of the Dales bus (at 9.45).</p> |
| Saltaire | <p>Year round opening Monday – Sunday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April - September 10:00 - 17:00 • October - March 10:00 - 16:00 <p>Staff hours per week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer: 119 hours • Winter: 102 hours | <p>The Saltaire VIC is located at Salt's Mill. External signage is good but the centre is located slightly out of the way (both in terms of its location around a corner of Salt's Mill but also in terms of the combined stair and corridor access) – passing footfall will be limited. The property is leased at a cost of £10,000 per annum – there are five years remaining on the lease. It is the most recently opened VIC (in 2011).</p> <p>Internally the centre is nicely decorated and the shelving and table layout works well. Staff are situated behind a table (as opposed to a counter) which creates a more open feel.</p> <p>Again retail is specific to the location.</p> |