



Title of Report:	Tender - Provision of Visitor Information Services in The Glens
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure and Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	20 February 2024
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	NO

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Accelerating Our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity
Outcome	Development of visitor economy
Lead Officer	Destination Manager Head of Tourism and Recreation

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	NO

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£20,000
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Member's approval for the provision of a Visitor Information Service in the Glens of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.

2.0 Background

The Destination Management team manage five networked Visitor Information Centres (VICs) within the Borough. It also manages one non-networked office. A gap existed in the provision of a visitor information service within the Glens. Council addressed this in the form of a service level agreement with an operator in the Glens. This contract will come to an end on 31 March 2024.

3.0 Visitor Information Centre provision

The visitor servicing remit sits alongside marketing, trade engagement and product development within the overall Destination Management structure.

The key element of responsibility within the visitor servicing remit is the management of the Visitor Information Centres. There are five networked VICs within the Borough: Ballycastle, Bushmills, Ballymoney, Limavady and Portrush. There is also one non-networked office, Rathlin Boathouse. The seasonal offices are Bushmills, Portrush and Rathlin Boathouse and are open from Easter to September / October.

The VIC's which have year round opening hours provide the VIC remit as well as a front of house provision for other service areas within Council, for example, Roe Valley Arts Centre, Ballymoney Town Hall and Portnagree House in Ballycastle.

The table below shows the total visitor enquiry figures from Cushendall LIO from 2019 – 2023. It ranked 7th out of 7 for visitor enquires, but 2nd out of 7 for out of state visitors, 60% of the visitors in 2023 were international.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Apr – end of Dec)
Cushendall	4,828	1,013	1,171	2,762	3,453

4.0 Procurement Process

Following procedures detailed in the procurement policy, Causeway Coast and Glens Council invited quotations from experienced operators to provide 'Visitor Information Services' in the Glens. The procurement process for this appointment took place via E-Sourcing and expressions of interest were sought. A Terms of Reference was issued (**Annex A**) and one company responded. The submission deadline was Friday 12th January 2024.

The following company submitted documentation:

Glens of Antrim Historical Society

Summary

	Score	Rank
Glens of Antrim Historical Society	100	1st

5.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approves:

Appointment of Glens of Antrim Historical Society as the Causeway Coast and Glens Council's preferred candidate for the provision of Visitor Information Services at a cost of £20,000.

This appointment would be for a twelve month period commencing on 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 with the option to extend for two further periods of 12 months each from 1st April, subject to satisfactory performance and council budgets.

ANNEX A

Invitation to Quote for

Provision of Visitor information Services

PLEASE NOTE:

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will evaluate bids received on the basis of the following criteria:

- Selection criteria (pass/fail)
- Award criteria (scored)

Only bidders who pass all the selection criteria will have their quote considered against the award criteria.

Contract effective from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 (with the option to extend for two further periods of 12 months each from 1st April, subject to satisfactory performance and council budgets)

Introduction

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council seeks proposals from suitably experienced organisations, for the provision of a Visitor Information Service within 'The Glens' of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Area. The Visitor Information provision must be based in suitable office accommodation located within a settlement that is close to the Causeway Coastal Route (excluding Ballycastle).

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area extends from the Roe Valley eastwards to the Glens of Antrim. Much of the area has a coastal fringe and a rich, agricultural countryside. Tourism plays a key role in the development of the local economy within the Council and is one of Northern Ireland's most important tourism destinations.

Scope of Works

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council wishes to appoint an experienced operator to deliver a Visitor Information Service in The Glens.

It must promote the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area as a holiday destination and communicate what the area has to offer the visitor, with regard to accommodation, experiences, events, attractions and other tourism related products.

Services required

To support the objectives outlined above the following services must be delivered;

Minimum Standards of Operation

Accessibility

The Information Office will be accessible to members of the public throughout the hours of opening.

Signposting

The Information Office should be well signposted to the public.

Interior/Exterior

A counter area must be available for the provision of Visitor Information Services. This does not have to be dedicated to the delivery of visitor information and may be used for other services. However, any other services that are delivered at these premises must not interfere with the delivery of the visitor information services requested within this document.

The Information Office must be staffed throughout the hours stated.

Adequate racking space must be allocated specifically to tourist literature.

Details of the networked Visitor Information Centres (VIC's) in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area must be prominently displayed inside The Visitor Information Office.

When closed, the address, telephone number and directions to the nearest VIC must be on display on the exterior of the building or on the window.

Opening Hours

Open one week before Easter until end of May

Monday - Saturday 10am – 2pm

June, July, August and September

Monday – Saturday 10am – 5pm

July and August

Sunday 12noon - 4pm

The Information Office should be open all bank and public holidays during period of opening.

Standards of Service

The Visitor Information Office will:

Provide a personal service at all times.

Provide an impartial service.

Display a maps of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and the CCR area.

Stock and display free literature from relevant outside agencies/bodies of the area.

Hold a reference manual for the use of visitors with details of all accommodation, places to eat, attractions etc. in the area.

Respond to any telephone enquires within 5 rings, written and email enquiries within 24 hours.

Accommodation Bookings

The Information Office will promote the accommodation booking service. The agreed standard charge for the area of £3 booking fee and 10% commission must be applied to all bookings. Income can be retained by provider of service to help offset running costs.

(Please note if the standard charge for the Borough changes the Information Office will also need to change their charges)

The Information Office must work with local guides / tourism providers to promote and sell on experiential tours of the area at a standard 10% commission rate. Income can be retained by provider of service to help offset running costs.

This service must be communicated to the trade and to the customer.

Staffing

The Information Office will ensure that all new staff participate in a relevant induction training programme and undertake any other training programmes as reasonably requested by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Administration

The Information Office will record statistics on all enquiries and report these to Ballycastle VIC on a monthly basis in a standardised format as agreed with the relevant member of staff from Ballycastle VIC. This format must include a breakdown of nationalities of enquirers, income if applicable and bookings made reference accommodation/ tours booked.

Budget

The budget of £20,000 per annum is available to support the delivery of Visitor Information Service. This budget is to include rent and overheads of suitable premises for the contract period.

Selection Criteria (Pass/Fail)

The selection criteria detailed below will be scored on a pass/fail basis. Bidders who fail to pass the selection criteria will not have their bid evaluated further.

1. Insurance

Tenderers must attach a copy of their current insurance certificate(s) as evidence of their insurance cover. Insurance cover must be valid at the time of submission. Expired certificates will not be accepted.

Public liability of a least £5 million pounds is required. By submitting an insurance certificate, the tenderer agrees to maintain this level of cover for the lifetime of the contract.

2. Experience

Staff are required to have a minimum of two years' experience of dealing with the public in a customer facing /or visitor information setting.

Detail staff experience, relevant qualifications, training etc.

3. Location

The office is based within a settlement in The Glens close to the CCR (excluding Ballycastle) and be based in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Area.

Award Criteria

Tenders will initially be assessed on the basis of qualitative selection criteria as set out. Tenders which pass the qualitative selection criteria will be assessed on the basis of price only. The Council intends to award the Contract to the Tenderer submitting the lowest priced, compliant Tender.

Quality (80 marks available)

Understanding of Client's Requirements. Tenderers must demonstrate a full understanding of the client's requirements as outlined in this 'Invitation to Quote' document.

Please demonstrate how you will deliver the service including people, premises, etc?

How will you record and monitor the visitor numbers to the information office?

The answers submitted will be scored in accordance with the scoring table on page 10.

Cost (20 Marks Available)

Project Delivery costs

Tenderers should complete the following

	£ Actual
Premises and overheads	
Staff Costs	
Total project delivery costs	

The bidder who submits the lowest price will receive the full 20 marks available for this section. All other bids will receive a lower score based upon the following formulae:

$$\frac{\text{Lowest Price}}{\text{Bidders price}} \times 20$$

Submission of quote

The full quote must be no longer than 5 A4 pages.

Submissions must be submitted via councils tendering portal eSourcing no later than 12:00pm Friday 12th January 2024

Submissions received after the closing date will not be considered.

The Council reserves the right:

- to waive any requirements of this procurement process (to the extent permitted by law);
- to disqualify any Tenderer who does not submit a compliant response in accordance with the instructions in this document;
- to withdraw this document or procurement process at any time or to re-invite responses on the same or any alternative basis;
- not to award any contract as a result of the current procurement process;

- to make whatever changes it sees fit to the timetable, structure, or content of the procurement process, dependent on the Council approval processes or for any other reason.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

Costs and expenses

Those providing proposals will not be entitled to claim any costs or expenses which may be incurred in preparing their proposal whether or not it is successful unless specifically detailed in the brief.

Period of validity

Prices contained within the proposal must be valid for acceptance for a period of 90 days from the submission date.

Official amendments

If it is necessary for the Council to amend the documentation in any way, prior to receipt, all those who have expressed an interest in quoting for this work will be notified in writing simultaneously. If appropriate, the deadline for receipt will be extended.

Compliance

Submissions must be submitted in accordance with these instructions. Failure to comply may result in rejection.

Payment

Payment terms will be thirty days from the receipt of invoice.

Council will pay the total tendered price over a period of 12 months subject to satisfactory performance. Should performance fall below the level required, Council reserves the right to withhold a monthly payment until such performance issues are addressed to the satisfaction of Council.

Points of Contact

In the case of a query, please contact **Caroline Carey:-**
Caroline.Carey@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Procedures

- All submissions must be via email, closing dates for clarification are two working days before closing date.
- All submissions must be in the English language and any alterations or erasures must be initialled by the signatories.
- Submissions must be fully compliant with the requirements detailed in the tender documentation.
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is not obliged to consider or accept alternative offers.
- Those providing tender submissions may also be rejected if the complete information is not given at the time of submission.

The successful bidder

The contract will be awarded to the organisation that complies best with the requirements. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is not required to accept the lowest, or any, tender and reserves the right to accept the whole or part of any tender.

Contract

All work undertaken in connection with the project will be by way of a Service Level Agreement with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Changes to Council document

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council shall not accept any alterations to the contents of this document.

Written Acceptance

Acceptance by the Council will only be made by written instruction to the successful Contractor.

Right to Issue Further Instructions

During the tendering period, the Council reserves the right to make changes to the Contract Documentation, which changes shall be accepted by the tenderer without reservation.

Expenses and Losses

The Council shall not be responsible for, or pay for, any expenses or losses that may be incurred by any tenderer in preparing their tender proposals.

Preparation of tender

It is the responsibility of prospective tenderers to obtain for themselves, at their own expense, any additional information necessary for the preparation of their tender.

Confidential Information

The Bidder agrees to keep confidential at all times the contents of this tender document and the Invitation to Tender and all information which has either been designated as confidential by the Authority in writing or that ought to be considered confidential including commercially sensitive information, information which relates to the business and affairs of the Authority (and its suppliers, service providers, agents, professional advisers and representatives) and all information which the Bidder receives or obtains as a result of its involvement in the Procurement.

Award of Tender

The Council reserves the right not to accept the lowest or any Tender under this process.

Copyright & Intellectual Property

The copyright of all text, intellectual property and other materials produced by the successful Contractor shall remain with the Council.

Equality – Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Contractors should be aware that the Council is required, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion,
- Racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to their obligations above, the Council shall in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Bribery Act 2010

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is subject to the Bribery Act 2010 and therefore has a zero tolerance to any form of bribery. The Council is committed to free and fair competition in all its business dealings.

If a contractor, or anyone acting on behalf of a contractor, offers a bribe to a Council Official or an elected Member in order to secure a contract, their submission will be

null and void, or if the contract has been awarded, it will be terminated with no penalty to Council.

Furthermore, if any person or organisation who is working on behalf of the Council, such as a Consultant, offers or accepts a bribe in respect of the award of Council business, their contract with Council will cease immediately, with no penalty to Council.

Quality criteria – Scoring table

Assessment	Score	Interpretation
Excellent	5	Provides a comprehensive and clear understanding of the council's requirements.
Good	4	Provides a substantial and clear understanding of the council's requirements. .
Satisfactory	3	Provides an adequate and clear understanding of the council's requirements.
Reservations	2	Provides a limited and/or unclear understanding of the council's requirements
Poor	1	Provides an inadequate understanding of the council's requirements
Unacceptable	0	No response or unacceptable information provided.

Marks for quality will be awarded based upon the score received from the table above multiplied by 16. For example a bidder scoring 3 from the table above will receive a total quality score of 48.