

# **CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO**

## **DECISION SCHEDULE**



**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008**

**at 10.00 am**

**in Committee Room A,  
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

Councillor Tumilty, Cabinet Member responsible for Culture, Leisure and Tourism will consider the following items.

**1. KEY DECISIONS**

No items

**2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

- 2.1 Hartlepool-Built Ships, Crews And Community Project – *Director of Adult and Community Services*

**3. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 Beach Lifeguard Season 2008 - *Director of Adult and Community Services*  
3.2 National Free Swimming Initiative - Changes To Active Card Scheme And  
Current Swimming Initiatives - *Director of Adult and Community Services*  
3.3 Tourist Information Centre – Regional Mystery Shopper Results 2008 -  
*Director of Adult and Community Services*

**4. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS**

No items

## **CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO**

Report To Portfolio Holder

**9<sup>th</sup> December 2008**



**Report of:** Director of Adult and Community Services

**Subject:** HARTLEPOOL-BUILT SHIPS, CREWS AND  
COMMUNITY PROJECT

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### SUMMARY

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise the Portfolio holder of Hartlepool's participation in the Nautical Archaeology Society North-East's "Hartlepool-built: Ships, Crews and Community" project.

#### **2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

This English heritage-funded project will create a new, unique community-driven maritime heritage resource documenting Hartlepool's long history and tradition of shipbuilding, allowing people to share the memories, stories and photographs of their involvement in this once-thriving industry with a world-wide audience.

#### **3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

Museum and Heritage is part of the Culture Leisure and Tourism Portfolio.

#### **4. TYPE OF DECISION**

Non Key

#### **5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Culture Leisure and Tourism Portfolio – December 2008

**6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

The Portfolio Holder is requested to support participation in 'Hartlepool-built: Ships, Crews and Community' project as it will provide Hartlepool with an internationally important and accessible resource featuring one of the town's most successful industries.

## **CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO**

Report To Portfolio Holder

**9<sup>th</sup> December 2008**



**Report of:** Director of Adult and Community Services

**Subject:** HARTLEPOOL-BUILT SHIPS, CREWS AND  
COMMUNITY PROJECT

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise the Portfolio holder of Hartlepool's participation in the Nautical Archaeology Society North-East's "Hartlepool-built: Ships, Crews and Community" project.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The North-East Branch of the Nautical Archaeology Society (Registered Charity No.264209), has been awarded grant-funding of £36,000 from the English Heritage Regional Capacity Building scheme, for its "Hartlepool-built: Ships, Crews and Community" project.
- 2.2 Supported by Hartlepool Borough Council's Library Service, Museums & Heritage Service and Tees Archaeology, Teesside Archives and the Teesside Branch of the World Ship Society, this project aims to:
- create a unique new community-driven maritime heritage resource documenting Hartlepool's long history and tradition of shipbuilding, through the memories, stories and photographs of the people involved
  - provide a new "Hartlepool-built" website to allow a world-wide audience access to this very personal resource and to further enhance this information by adding relevant maritime material from the collections of a range of Museum, Library and other maritime sources
  - actively encourage anyone with an interest in Hartlepool's shipbuilding history to explore their own maritime family history and to contribute their stories to the website

- 2.3 The project will initially draw upon the existing collections of photographs, paintings, drawings and ship models held by the partner organisations. Members of the public will be encouraged to share their personal maritime recollections with the project, through a series of local 'Hartlepool-built Roadshows', to be held, at Hartlepool Central Library, the Museum of Hartlepool, Hartlepool Headland and Teesside Archives.
- 2.4 Active links will be established with organisations not usually associated with maritime heritage, for example, encouraging local Genealogical Societies to develop 'maritime family trees' for Hartlepool-built ships' crews.
- 2.5 With Hartlepool hosting the 2010 Tall Ships event, and 2012 marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closure of Gray's shipyard, the creation of this archive will provide a timely, internationally important maritime resource that can be freely accessed by a world-wide audience of professional and non-professional people with an interest in ships and the sea.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 This project offers considerable benefits and opportunities, not only for the local Hartlepool communities, but for all the participating groups, and will:
  - further raise the profile of Hartlepool's long and distinguished history of shipbuilding to a new worldwide public audience
  - allow this audience access to otherwise 'hidden' maritime archive material and encourage new material to be submitted
  - significantly enhance and develop existing shipbuilding archive material through a programme of active maritime research, focussing on sourcing and identifying relevant material such as crew lists, builders-models, ship's plans, maritime art collections, and newspaper accounts of vessel launchings etc.
  - generate time-sensitive oral testimonies and reminiscences of former shipyard-workers and their families, former ship's crews and passengers who may have travelled on Hartlepool-built ships
  - allow new audience development, for example, school groups, teenagers/youths, genealogical and maritime history groups
  - significantly enhance existing capacity to answer local, national and international maritime enquiries relating specifically to Hartlepool-built vessels, particularly through the efforts of a new, local 'maritime information-sharing' network established on the success of the Nautical Archaeology Society North East, North East England Maritime Archaeology Research Archive (NEEMARA) project.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Portfolio Holder is requested to support participation in 'Hartlepool-built: Ships, Crews and Community' project as it will provide Hartlepool with an internationally important and accessible resource featuring one of the town's most successful industries.

CONTACT OFFICER: John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)

## **CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder

9 December, 2008



**Report of:** Director of Adult and Community Services

**Subject:** BEACH LIFEGUARD SEASON 2008

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### **SUMMARY**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the Portfolio Holder on the Beach Lifeguard season for 2008.

#### **2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

Lifeguards were recruited using a range of advertising with all posts filled, although there were times when there were staff shortages. There was one reported aquatic incident and 649 reported other incidents, varying from minor first aid to giving general safety advice.

#### **3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

Lifeguards fall within the responsibility of the Portfolio Holder.

#### **4. TYPE OF DECISION**

Non-key decision.

#### **5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio meeting, 9th December, 2008.

#### **6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

The Portfolio Holder is requested to:-

1. Note the contents of the report.

**Report of:** Director of Adult and Community Services

**Subject:** BEACH LIFEGUARD SEASON 2008

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## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Portfolio Holder on the recent Lifeguard season.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2004, The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) was commissioned to undertake a Beach Safety Assessment identifying various aspects of running a Beach Lifeguard Service. Based on this report, Hartlepool Borough Council decided to reinstate the Lifeguard Service for Seaton Carew and The Headland.

- 2.2 The decision was taken when the Lifeguards were reinstated that the service should not only operate for the school summer holidays, but should also include May and Spring Bank Holidays and the weekends from May Bank Holiday up to the school summer holidays from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm.

- 2.3 The level of cover recommended by the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) is:-

**Seaton Carew** (between the North Shelter and the Coach Park)  
Four lifeguards with five at peak times, inclusive of at least one supervisor.

**Headland Beaches** (Fish Sands and Block Sands)  
Two lifeguards at each site, inclusive of one supervisor.

## 3. RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

- 3.1 Advertising for the vacancies was undertaken through the normal outlets, but in addition a radio advert and flyers were produced. Monitoring was not undertaken at the time of recruitment regarding the success of the different forms or advertising, however, all Lifeguard positions were filled successfully.

- 3.2 The Lifeguard Staffing Levels required to provide the cover as recommended by the Royal Life Saving Society was:-

- Beach Lifeguard Supervisors ..... 3
- Beach Lifeguards (inclusive of 3 relief Supervisors) ..... 11
- Casual Beach Lifeguards ..... 6



3.3 There were some staff shortages this season mainly due to the time it now takes to complete the recruitment process, mostly health clearances. As a result, some staff was unable to start work until June/July. In order to address this issue in the future, Lifeguard posts will be advertised earlier for the 2009 season. Fortunately for the first three weeks of the season, work was taking place at Block Sands in order to provide PD Tees Port with vehicle access to the Heugh Pier. As a result, no access was allowed at the site, so Lifeguard cover was not needed during this time.

3.4 All the Lifeguards and Supervisors are trained to:-

- RLSS National Beach Lifeguard Qualification (NBLQ).

Additionally the Supervisors/Relief Supervisors are also trained in:-

- RYA VHF Radio Certificate
- Quad bike Training
- Towing of trailers training
- First Aid at Work training
- 4 x 4 off road training
- Defibrillator training

All specified rescue watercraft (jet ski & sled) users are holders of the RYA Personal Watercraft (PWC) certificate.

3.5 Two NBLQ courses were delivered by the Beach Safety Officer in April and May, all candidates successfully passed.

3.6 All Lifeguards have to undergo compulsory in-house training to practice skills learned and keep up to date with any changes in protocols. It is recommended by the Royal Life Saving Society that Lifeguards undertake a minimum of four hours training per month incorporating a variety of the elements required on a rolling programme.

3.7 Initially ongoing training was delivered mainly on Thursday evenings, however, during the summer holidays, training was delivered on Wednesday mornings, including a pool and theory session at Mill House Leisure Centre, then a beach session at Seaton Carew. A total of 4 hours' training was conducted, which was incorporated into the shift patterns. Lifeguards are permitted to attend as many training sessions as they want, however, they will only be paid for 4 hours per calendar month with the exception of the summer period when training sessions are incorporated within the shift pattern, averaging 6-8 hours.

#### 4. BASES

- 4.1 This year, we were unable to site the Lifeguard cabin due to the demolition of the old Toilets at the Rocket Car Park. A hire cabin was sited on the Promenade for the season. The new landscaping works will include an area for the Lifeguard cabin, so it can be sited as previously in the forthcoming season.
- 4.2 The service has access to the Rocket House at Seaton Carew, which this year acted as a welfare, changing and storage base, due the Bus Station rooms being unavailable. Whilst not ideal, it provided a useful alternative asset.
- 4.3 At The Headland, two portacabins were positioned, one at Fish Sands and another at Block Sands, these are temporary hired units.

#### 5. INCIDENT STATISTICS

- 5.1 There was one reported aquatic incident where the jet ski was required. Additionally there were 649 reported other incidents varying from minor first aid to giving general safety advice. These are detailed below:-

Seaton incidents	No. of Times 2007	No. of Times 2008
Dogs with owners in ban area	305	344
Inflatable warnings	18	12
Horses in patrol area	21	17
Jet ski users in bathing area	7	8
Minor first aid	33	14
4 x 4 vehicles on the beach	15	14
Parental advice	15	10
Other safety advice	13	7
Other incidents	22	5
People consuming alcohol	10	6
Swimmers out of bathing area	8	0
Quads on the beach	4	7
Missing children	4	1
Incoming tide warnings	1	0
Surfers in bathing area	0	0
Jelly fish warnings	0	3
Anti social behaviour	3	1
Police calls	3	2
Red flag warnings	2	38
Marine stings	1	0
Fishing in bathing area	2	1
RSPCA calls	3	1
Power boats in bathing area	1	1

<b>Seaton incidents</b>	<b>No. of Times 2007</b>	<b>No. of Times 2008</b>
Motor bikes on beach	4	1
Needles found on beach	1	2
Missing person	2	1
Wading rescue	1	0
Major incidents	2	1
Major First aid	2	2

<b>Headland</b>	<b>No. of Times 2007</b>	<b>No. of Times 2008</b>
Dogs with owners in ban areas	40	43
Parental advice	8	1
Other safety advice	11	6
Minor first aid	29	25
People consuming alcohol	3	29
People jumping/diving off breakwaters	9	18
Jelly fish warnings	1	0
Other incidents	16	0
Anti social behaviour	4	15
Red flag warnings	0	0
Jet ski / power boat users in bathing area	2	7
Incoming tide warnings	3	0
Inflatable warnings	0	1
Jumping/diving from town wall	4	1
Swimmers in shipping channel	0	2
People jumping off Pilot Pier buildings	1	0
Wading rescues	2	0
Fishing in bathing area	1	0
Missing children	0	0
Marine stings	0	0
Needles found on beach	0	4
Major first aid	1	0
Major rescue	1	0

5.2 A total of 650 reported incidents occurred, most of these were either advisory and/or preventative actions. The total reported incidents last year was 639 and 1,286 in 2006. This large decrease from 2006 is a result of poor weather throughout the last two seasons.

5.3 Although there were a number of visits from the Dog Warden and additional dog signage placed directly onto the beach, dog owners in the ban areas still proves to be a problem, with an increase of 42 reported incidents. Dog Control Orders are earmarked to be put in force for the beach areas, including giving designated officers the power to issue spot fines. It is hoped that this should see a reduction of dog related incidents in the future.

5.4 Generally due to poor weather this season, as a whole, has been a quiet one. In contrast because of the poor weather/sea conditions, we have had more 'red flag' days, especially at Seaton and, as a result, there has been a major increase in warning bathers not to enter the sea when the red flag is flying. Additionally, the Lifeguards have dealt with the following major incidents:-

#### 5.4.1 **Seaton**

- 26th May - A 20 year old female fell from her horse and suffered head and back injuries, the lady was taken to hospital via the Air Ambulance. This was our first helicopter landing, it was noted that our emergency action plan for this incident went according to plan.
- 24th July - An elderly lady tripped over a brick on a slip way, which resulted in facial injuries, an ambulance was called.
- 24th August - A kite surfer lost control of his kite and was in danger of drifting out to sea. In order to make it back to shore, the kite surfer released himself from his kite and the Lifeguards used the jet ski to retrieve the kite.

#### 5.4.2 **Headland**

- No major incidents occurred at The Headland, however, even though generally the beaches were quiet, there was a significant increase in the number of people consuming alcohol on the beaches and piers and also an increase in the number of anti social behaviour incidents.

## 6. **EVENTS**

- 6.1 9th - 27th June - We provided Lifeguard cover for a theatrical event at Preston Park, as some of the actors would be entering the lake as part of the show.
- 6.2 5th & 6th July - We provided Lifeguard cover for the Maritime Festival; however, some of the water based events were cancelled due to heavy rain.
- 6.3 15th - 17th July - Primary schools were offered the chance to participate in a Rookie Lifeguard training/competition session at Seaton Carew. Events included a rope throw, flag race and use of a nipper board (small soft top version of a rescue board). Initially all places were booked, but unfortunately some schools cancelled due to industrial action. Overall the event was a success with lots of positive feedback from the schools that participated and good press coverage, the winning team at the end of the 3 days was Lynnfield Primary School who were presented with a trophy.

## 7. **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- 7.1 Because of its success and to emphasis the water safety message to school children, we are extending the Rookie Lifeguard training to 5 days in July 2008.
- 7.2 As an efficiency saving by not out-sourcing training the Beach Safety Officer will hopefully in 2009 deliver the RYA PWC (jet ski) training to the lifeguards by becoming an RYA PWC instructor. This will depend on the availability of appropriate 'PWC trainers' training courses.

## 8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Portfolio Holder is requested to:-

- 1. Note the contents of the report.

CONTACT OFFICER: Debbie Wood, Beach Safety Officer

### Background Papers

Cabinet Report, 22nd March, 2004 - Beach Lifeguarding.

## **CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder

9th December, 2008



**Report of:** Director of Adult and Community Services

**Subject:** NATIONAL FREE SWIMMING INITIATIVE -  
CHANGES TO ACTIVE CARD SCHEME AND  
CURRENT SWIMMING INITIATIVES

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### **SUMMARY**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

Further to the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio reports of 19th August and 11th November, 2008, this report seeks to further update the Portfolio Holder concerning the free swimming scheme and advise on the necessary alterations to the Active Card Scheme as well as other swimming incentives currently available at Mill House Leisure Centre.

#### **2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

In order to adequately monitor uptake and throughput of the Government's free swimming initiative, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have agreed it would be appropriate to link this initiative to the Active Card Scheme. This means that all Over 60's and Under 16's wishing to swim free of charge from 1st April, 2009 onwards will have to be in possession of an Active Card.

DCMS have however said that we will be unable to charge for the Active Card. Currently, all those entitled to concessions (dependant on eligibility criteria), including all Over 60's who are Borough residents, can obtain the card free of charge. As all non-Borough residents irrespective of age and some Under 16's (dependant on their parent's eligibility criteria) living in Hartlepool currently pay an annual fee for the Active Card, the report sets out the required changes necessary to allow the link to the free swimming scheme to be made.

Two other current incentives available, the sale of Swim Season Memberships and the Mill House Savings Stamps scheme will also be affected as a consequence of the application of free swimming initiative. The report therefore also details the impact on these as well as action taken to date.

**3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

Sport and Recreation is part of the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio.

**4. TYPE OF DECISION**

Non-key decision.

**5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio meeting, 9th December, 2008.

**6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

The Portfolio Holder is requested to:-

1. Note the implications of linking the free swimming initiative to the Active Card Scheme.
2. Note the resultant changes to the Active Card Scheme.
3. Note the action of Officers in relation to the sale and refund of Swim Season Memberships and Mill House Savings Stamps.
4. Note the current discussions of Officers with the PCT regarding available funding to offset the budgetary pressures identified.

**Report of:** Director of Adult and Community Services

**Subject:** NATIONAL FREE SWIMMING INITIATIVE -  
CHANGES TO ACTIVE CARD SCHEME AND  
CURRENT SWIMMING INITIATIVES

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## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 Further to the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio reports of 19th August and 11th November, 2008, this report seeks to further update the Portfolio Holder concerning the free swimming scheme and advise on the necessary alterations to the Active Card scheme as well as other swimming incentives currently available at Mill House Leisure Centre.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Portfolio Holder has previously approved the Council's participation in the national free swimming initiative for Under 16's and Over 60's during the period 2009-2011 and acceptance of the associated funding offers from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).
- 2.2 Officers also previously advised in the Portfolio report of 11th November, 2008 that in order to adequately monitor uptake and performance in this initiative, it would be necessary to link it with the Active Card Scheme.
- 2.3 At the time of the report, an assessment was being made by Officers of the implications of doing this and were granted delegated powers to make any alterations necessary should they be required. Further information in relation to this is set out in the report below.

## **3. ACTIVE CARD SCHEME**

- 3.1 The Active Card Scheme currently covers both Borough and non-Borough residents, which has been fortunate as the free swimming initiative has to operate in a similar way with free participation being available to all Over 60's and Under 16's, irrespective of whether they live in the Borough or not.
- 3.2 DCMS have confirmed that it will require performance monitoring data and agree it would be appropriate to link the scheme to the Active Card, provided we do not charge any fee for it. This therefore means that Over 60's and Under 16's will have to have an Active Card to be able to swim free of charge and if they do not, a resultant charge for the activity will apply.

3.2 - National Free Swimming Initiative - Changes to Active Card



- 3.3 Currently, all Borough residents entitled to concessions can obtain an Active Card free of charge. This includes all Over 60's but only some Under 16's (dependant on their parent's eligibility criteria) who in this case, currently pay an annual fee of £5.25.
- 3.4 Similarly, whilst non-Borough residents can obtain an Active Card, they are not entitled to concessionary rates and therefore have to purchase them. For Adults (including Over 60's) the annual fee is £10.50 and £5.25 for Juniors.

#### **4. IMPACT ON LINKING INITIATIVE TO ACTIVE CARD SCHEME**

##### **4.1 Over 60's**

- 4.1.1 As identified in section 3.2 we will no longer be able to charge for the purchase of Active Cards. For Borough residents who are Over 60, no alteration to the scheme is therefore required. However, for non-Borough residents Over 60, we will have to offer cards free of charge.
- 4.1.2 Currently, we do not have any Active Card holders aged Over 60 living outside the Borough. However, if any are attracted to use facilities in Hartlepool, only swimming will be available free with all other activities being charged at the normal membership rate with no further concessions being offered.

##### **4.2 Under 16's**

- 4.2.1 Currently, some Borough (dependant upon parent's eligibility criteria) and non-Borough Under 16 residents are charged for an Active Card, but this charge will be removed as from 1st April, 2009 to accommodate the free swimming scheme. At this point in time, we have a total of 330 Under 16 card holders, equating to £1,700 approximately per annum in fees and this income will be lost in the future, creating a further budgetary pressure.
- 4.2.2 In anticipation therefore of the introduction of the free swim initiative, the sale of new Junior Active Cards have only been offered on a pro-rata basis since November to run until 31st March, 2009. It is not intended to refund any fees outstanding on any other cards still valid post 31st March, 2009, as the amounts involved will be negligible.
- 4.2.3 As with the Over 60's, only those Under 16 card holders residing within the Borough may be entitled to further concessions on activities other than free swimming, dependant upon their parent's eligibility criteria. Those from outside the Borough will be charged the appropriate membership rates.

#### **5. SWIM SEASON MEMBERSHIPS**

- 5.1 Currently, Active Card holders have an added benefit of being able to purchase Swim Season Membership, providing unlimited swimming on an annual or six monthly basis. Obviously, the consequence of the free swimming initiative will therefore impact on any Over 60's or Under 16's in possession of a valid membership post 31st March, 2009.
- 5.2 Having assessed the situation, Officers have determined that this will affect 53 individuals aged Over 60 but no Under 16's. The valid months outstanding post 31st March, 2009 equates to 84 months (£556.08) and as the amounts involved are more substantial, Officers are writing to these individuals concerned to initiate a refund process, having discussed the approach and methodology in full with colleagues from the Audit Section. Similarly, any individuals currently saving for the next purchase of their Swim Season Membership via the Mill House savings stamp scheme are also affected and refunds will be offered.
- 5.3 Sales of the savings stamps for Swim Season Membership have subsequently been suspended and membership is only being offered on a pro rata basis to 31st March, 2009.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 As reported to the Portfolio Holder in the report of 11th November, 2008, the financial shortfall as a consequence of the free swimming initiative is estimated to be £15,420 for 2009-2010 and £17,962 for 2010-2011.
- 6.2 A further financial pressure of £1,700 per annum has now also been identified as a consequence of not being able to charge for Active Cards as detailed in Section 4.2.1.
- 6.3 Whilst these pressures have been highlighted as part of the current budgetary planning process for 2009-2010, Officers have commenced discussions with the PCT regarding the possibility of available funding being made available on a partnership basis. The obvious health benefits associated with the potential for increased physical activity via this initiative, particularly with the Over 60's age group should be particularly attractive to the PCT and it is hoped that they will wish to be associated with this scheme.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Portfolio Holder is requested to:-

- 1. Note the implications of linking the free swimming initiative to the Active Card Scheme.
- 2. Note the resultant changes to the Active Card Scheme.

3. Note the action of Officers in relation to the sale and refund of Swim Season Memberships and Mill House Savings Stamps.
4. Note the current discussions of Officers with the PCT regarding available funding to offset the budgetary pressures identified.

CONTACT OFFICER: Pat Usher, Sport and Recreation Manager

Background Papers

Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Report, 19th August, 2008 - Government Announcement on Free Swimming Scheme.

Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Report, 11th November, 2008 - National Free Swimming Initiative - Further Update.

## **CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder

9th December, 2008

**Report of:** Director of Adult and Community Services

**Subject:** TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE –  
REGIONAL MYSTERY SHOPPER RESULTS  
2008

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### SUMMARY

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform on the delivery and positive impact the Tourist Information Centre plays in providing information to visitors.

#### **2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

The report outlines the positive contribution that the Tourist Information Centre provides to the region and also assists the Tourist Information Centre in improving their telephone, email, postal and customer service handling skills, attached as **Appendix 1**.

#### **3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

The portfolio member has responsibility for Museum & Heritage issues

#### **4. TYPE OF DECISION**

Non-key

#### **5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio, 9 December 2008

**6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

To note the information provided in this report

**Report of:** Director of Adult and Community Services

**Subject:** TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE –  
REGIONAL MYSTERY SHOPPER RESULTS  
2008

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform on the delivery and positive impact the Tourist Information Centre plays in providing information to visitors.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 One North East commissioned Customer Maze Ltd to carry out the annual mystery shopping exercise in order to help the network identify best practice, training needs and improvements to the service overall in line with the latest customer service thinking.
- 2.2 The objectives of the One North East Mystery Shopping programme are to assist the regions Tourist Information Centre's in improving their telephone, email, postal and customer service handling skills, attached as **Appendix 1**
- 2.3 The results provide a benchmarking report to allow comparisons to be made and also provides an independent assessment for the 'TIC of the Year' category of the North East England Tourism Awards.

**3. TELEPHONE MYSTERY SHOPPER**

- 3.1 Hartlepool scored 76%, slightly higher than last year and above the regional average of 69.9%

**4. EMAIL MYSTERY SHOPPER**

- 4.1 The score of 44% is 25% higher than the regional average, staff are aiming to achieve a higher score in the next round of mystery shopping

**5      ONSITE MYSTERY SHOPPER**

- 5.1      Within the region Hartlepool come in the top 10 with a score of 81%, the regional average is 73%

**6.      POSTAL MYSTERY SHOPPER**

Hartlepool's score is 73%, again slightly higher than the regional average 68%

**7.      OVERALL RESULTS**

- 7.1      Hartlepool Tourist Information Centre achieved joint 5<sup>th</sup> place regionally with an average of 71%. The total number of TIC's in the regional are 36. Within the Tees Valley sub region Hartlepool scored higher than Stockton, Middlesbrough, Darlington, Guisbrough, Redcar and Saltburn.

**8.      RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1      The Portfolio Holder is requested to:
- i)      Note the success of Hartlepool's Tourist Information Centre

CONTACT OFFICER:      John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)

### 3.3 Appendix 1 – TIC – Regional Mystery Shopper Results 2008

#### **HARTLEPOOL TELEPHONE MYSTERY SHOPPER**

#### **The overall results**

Overall, your TIC scored **76%**

Your score is summarised in the table below:

Criteria	Score 2005	% 2005	Score 2006	% 2006	Score 2007	% 2007	Score 2008	% 2008
Answered or not answered	4	8	7	14	10	20	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>
Speed of answer	9	18	8	16	9	18	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>
Greeting – phrase used	3	6	3	6	3	6	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
Greeting – tone of voice	3	6	3	6	4	8	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>
Speed of communicating the info	3	6	3	6	3	6	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>
Effectiveness in communicating info	3	6	4	8	3	6	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>
Mystery shopper response to call	3	6	3	6	3	6	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
Bonus points	0	0	1	2	0	0	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>76%</b>

#### **Key**

Number of points	Description	Colour code
0 points	No response/unintelligible	
1 point	Very poor	
2 points	Poor	
3 points	Good / average	
4 points	Very good	
5 points	Excellent	
6 points	[speed of answer]	
7 points	[speed of answer]	
8 points	[speed of answer]	
9 points	[speed of answer]	
10 points	[speed of answer]	



## **HARTLEPOOL EMAIL MYSTERY SHOPPER**

### **The overall results**

Overall, your TIC scored **44%**

Your score is summarised in the table below along with your previous scores from 2005, 2006 and 2007:

Criteria	Score 2005	% 2005	Score 2006	% 2006	Score 2007	% 2007	Score 2008	% 2008
Speed of response	0	0	0	0	4	8	0	0
Personalisation	2	4	4	8	5	10	4	8
Writing style	2	4	4	8	4	8	3	6
Spelling, grammar, punctuation	3	6	2	4	3	6	3	6
Response to enquiry 1	2	4	4	8	4	8	2	4
Response to enquiry 2	2	4	3	6	3	6	2	4
Depth of detail	3	6	4	8	4	8	1	2
Signposting	2	4	4	8	5	10	3	6
Mystery shopper response to email	2	4	4	8	4	8	3	6
Bonus points	0	0	2	4	2	4	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>44%</b>

### **Key**

Number of points	Description	Colour code
0 points	No response / unintelligible	
1 point	Very poor	
2 points	Poor	
3 points	Good / average	
4 points	Very good	
5 points	Excellent	

**HARTLEPOOL ONSITE MYSTERY SHOPPER****The overall results**

Overall, your TIC scored **81%**

Your score is summarised in the table below:

Criteria	% 2005	% 2006	% 2007	% 2008
Ease of finding the TIC	5	5	5	5
Signage from the road and on foot	5	5	5	5
Attractiveness of TIC shop front	5	5	5	5
Was the TIC open?	5	5	5	5
Usefulness of the window information	2	2	2	2
First impression of the TIC on entering	2	3	3	3
Ambience of the TIC	2	4	4	4
Disabled access	N/A	3	3	3
Merchandising of saleable products	4	4	4	5
Merchandising of 'free' information	1	3	3	3
Speed of service	4	5	4	5
Presentation of the counter area	4	5	5	4
Presentation of the member of staff	3	5	4	5
Greeting of the member of staff	2	5	5	5
Tone and politeness of the member of staff	3	5	5	5
Relevance and accuracy of information provided	3	4	3	4
Speed the information was delivered	1	5	3	5
Promotion of additional products and services	0	4	0	0
Collection of contact details	0	0	0	0
Enthusiasm of the Mystery Shopper	3	4	3	4
Overall impression of the service received	4	4	4	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>81%</b>

**Key**

Number of points	Description	Colour code
0 points	No response / unintelligible	
1 point	Very poor	
2 points	Poor	
3 points	Good / average	
4 points	Very good	
5 points	Excellent	

## HARTLEPOOL POSTAL MYSTERY SHOPPER

### The overall results

Overall, your TIC scored **73%**

Your score is summarised in the table below:

Criteria	2005 Score	2006 Score	2007 Score	2008 Score
Speed of answer	5	7	10	<b>7</b>
The packaging	2	3	1	<b>3</b>
The customer's data	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
Ease of opening	3	2	0	<b>2</b>
Relevance of enquiry one	5	3	5	<b>5</b>
Relevance of enquiry two	2	4	2	<b>5</b>
Mystery shopper response to postal enquiry	2	3	3	<b>4</b>
Bonus points	1	3	3	<b>4</b>
<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>73%</b>

### Key

Number of points	Description	Colour code
0 points	No response/unintelligible	
1 point	Very poor	
2 points	Poor	
3 points	Good / average	
4 points	Very good	
5 points	Excellent	
6 points [bonus points]	[Excellent]	
7 points [speed of answer]	[Very good]	
10 points [speed of answer]	[Excellent]	