CONSULTANTS' BRIEF
Visitor Information Plan

1. Purpose

A major review of existing tourist information provision is required in order to develop a long term strategic framework for visitor information across Powys.

This study is intended to determine what visitor information is available in the county at major entry points and at other key locations across Powys. The study should include the identification of areas or locations requiring further or improved provision and should ascertain the best format or method of delivery of that provision.

The study will continue by identifying future visitor information needs based on our key target audiences, and an analysis of the most effective and efficient methods of delivery of that information.

It will devise a clear visitor servicing strategy for a hierarchy of tourist information provision and guidelines on when, how and to what extent and combination, various visitor information options such as staffed tourist information centres, information panels, tourist signing, smart phone apps, and new technology solutions can be combined to maximum effect.

2. Our Vision for Visitor Information Services in Powys

Powys County Council wish to drive and support the process of change and the modernisation of visitor information, and our visitor information approach will be to ensure the availability of excellent information, tailored to the needs of the individual visitor, when, where and how it is most useful within the resources available.

Visitors inspired to enjoy the many destinations and experiences that Powys offers will easily access information about products and services that interest them and move quickly to booking with providers who met their needs. The simplicity and speed of this process will set Powys apart from its competitors and thereby assist in securing more visitors to Powys and increasing visitor revenue.

The provision of visitor information is likely to change dramatically over the next 10 years. Information will be communicated to visitors in many different ways. More and more visitors and potential visitors will use the Internet to plan their visit. In-destination information will see a growth in the use of smart phones to access information on demand, but 'face to face' information and advice will continue to be important and will be available in many different locations.

Local businesses such as retailers, restaurants, transport operators, public houses, village shops, petrol stations and post offices will find that they can increase their business and increase customer satisfaction by providing visitor information as part of their service.

By developing a Visitor Information Plan for Powys, we want to achieve a competitive advantage for Powys, by:

- Maximising the conversion of consumers from interest to booking, by ensuring that they have access to excellent information and efficient routes to booking.
- Providing high quality services and warmth of welcome to visitors, thereby maximising their enjoyment and providing compelling reasons for them to return to Powys and to recommend others to visit.
- Maximising economic value of the visit, by presenting information as attractive offers in line with customer needs and special interests, in a range of formats and locations.
- Monitoring provision and consumer behavior to constantly improve visitor information provision and its impact on visitor economy growth.

3. Sustainable Tourism Powys Project Background

Sustainable Tourism Powys is an innovative new programme delivered by Powys County Council to support and develop tourism in Powys into a dynamic and competitive sector. The project will offer a range of support that will develop and promote the tourism offer in Powys including; grants schemes, targeted marketing, business advice and support.

The overall aim of the project is to develop a tourism sector that is dynamic, sustainable and competitive, that supports the local economy to sustain the social, economic and environmental aspects of the community.

The project will look to support a range of activities under the following headings:

- Sense of Place
- Activity and Wildlife Tourism
- ICT Business Development
- Green Tourism

The project through its programme of support will deliver against the following objectives:

- To support the development of sustainable tourism.
- To enhance the visitor experience.
- To develop and improve the tourism infrastructure.
- To improve the information and interpretation available for the visitor.
- Increase visitor satisfaction and encourage repeat visits.
- To provide support to businesses and enterprises operating with in the tourism sector to allow them to offer a quality product.
- To support and implement the use of ICT and digital marketing within the sector.
- To improve and develop activity based tourism.
- To support sense of place activities that promotes the local distinctiveness of Powys.
- Improve visitors' awareness of the local history, heritage and culture.

- To develop and effectively promote integrated transport services for visitors to the County.
- To develop mechanisms for sharing best practice and joint working.

4. Tourism in Powys

Powys is the largest county in Wales with sparse populations and a highly rural context. Tourism is one of the largest employers and rivals agriculture in its economic importance. It is therefore vital that tourism develops strongly and the RDP programme is supporting this process. Powys also has a superb natural environment and has strong conservation ethos. Thus there is concern that any tourism that is encouraged should be as sustainable as possible.

There are three old counties in Powys – Montgomeryshire, Radnorshire and Brecknockshire. All three have important visitor economies and differing product strengths. In Brecknockshire, tourism is dominated by the National Park status of the Brecon Beacons, which has recently been granted destination status by Visit Wales and is delivering its destination management plan. In Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire, there are a number on emerging sub-destinations, including the Cambrian Mountains, Dyfi Biosphere, Lake Vyrnwy and Offa's Country. It is of vital importance however that all areas of Powys are treated equally in the development of this programme, even though actions necessary may be different in different areas.

Tourism makes a substantial contribution to the Powys economy, supporting over 12,327 jobs. There are 1,549 tourism accommodation establishments' in Powys, with a recent bed-stock survey confirming a total of 49,697 sleeping / bed spaces. The average length of stay is 3.71 bednights with an average spend per day visitor of £41.61 per night. STEAM research figures indicate that 3 million day trips were taken in 2011, spending £ 84.4 million in the local economy.

Tourism is a substantial sector of the region's economy, spreading employment and income throughout Powys. Tourism in Powys helps to support other industries such as agriculture, crafts and local services. These in turn support the tourism industry, transport and local services. The current situation presents a platform of opportunity to target growth sectors of the market and this provides a sound foundation for further development and niche marketing activity.

The landscape and environmental resources of the area are, in tourism terms, attractive and capable of competing with other destinations. The prominence of Powys in the tourism market place results from the fact that both the north and south boundaries of the county encompass a share of the resources and attractions of the Snowdonia and Brecon Beacons National Parks - assets of national and international profile. The varying landscape throughout the area is an attraction in its own right, and provides suitable settings for a variety of holiday experiences.

As competition in tourism increases year on year, the quality of the visitor's experience becomes of increasing importance. Changes in technology and the way people make holiday choices now mean that where previous experience and word of

mouth recommendation can be key features of the decision to visit. Satisfaction with a holiday or short break can depend on a variety of factors and this visitor information plan will have an important role in helping Powys County Council service the needs and expectations of visitors in the future.

5. **Tourism Plans & Strategies**
   Tourism trends and priorities are laid out in a number of Plan and Strategies. These include:

   Powys Regeneration Strategy 2011
   Mid Wales Regional Tourism Strategy (2011) available at www.tpmw.co.uk
   Brecon Beacons Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2011) available from www.businessinfobreconbeacons.com
   Achieving Our Potential 2006 - 2013 - Tourism Strategy for Wales
   Wales Sustainable Tourism Framework (2009)
   Wales Transport and Tourism Action Plan (2010)
   Powys Visitor Transport Report (2012)

6. **Data and other relevant work**
   Powys County Council holds STEAM data for each county separately as well as 2009 and 2011 visitor satisfaction survey data.
   Other background data for Powys can be found at www.powys-i.org.uk
   In the Brecon Beacons there is a variety of value/volume data as well as visitor survey data. Much is summarised in the Tourism Strategy but the reports are available at www.businessinfobreconbeacons.com and www.getactive-beacons.co.uk/news

   Links to I-speed Interreg Project
   The Tourism Department of Powys County Council have taken part in an Interreg IVC funded project identifying how ICT can create a competitive edge for the tourism industry. Research has indicated that smart phone applications (multi platform) are an effective method of communication with the end user; however, functionality within the application is crucial. Therefore, analysis of information provision and delivery of information pertinent to each of our target visitor markets is crucial in the development of an effective visitor information application. We would welcome the opportunity to further develop the findings of this project when planning future visitor information solutions.

7. **Consultancy Objectives**
   The objectives of this work are to:

- Comprehensively audit current information provision, through not only Tourist Information Centres but also other communication channels – print, web, mobile etc.
- Determine the information needs and expectations of the visitor, before, during and after their visit. Research most effective methods of providing visitor information, incorporating virtual (apps, QR codes, web based etc) and face to face. Analysis of information required by various visitor target markets (to be agreed), and appropriate methods of communication with each market type.
- Analyse the flow of visitors to the area and as a result determine the best locations for visitor information, with particular reference to major entry points, and transport hubs.

- To determine where there are gaps in information provision and determine what format of information provision is needed and the most suitable locations (if applicable).
- Look at opportunities to involve local tourism businesses and retailers in the provision of quality visitor information.
- Provide a strategic direction for the next 5-10 years with the information needs of the visitor at heart, while highlighting the potential use of sophisticated new technology solutions in the area of visitor servicing, such as mobile devices.

8. Consultants' task
Key tasks for the consultants include:
- Audit, collation and analysis of existing (or lack of) information including face to face, pre and on arrival, virtual etc.
- Audit of key tourism destinations including attractions and popular countryside locations
- Identification of potentially suitable areas that require better information for visitors
- Identification of a number of different formats that information can be provided by location and target audience
- Identify opportunities to involve local tourism businesses and retailers in the provision of quality visitor information, and associated training and developments needs.
- Outline a clear Visitor Information Plan for the next 5-10 years, to include a hierarchy of tourist information provision to be implemented across Powys.
- Analyse consumer behaviour and provide intelligence to assist providers of visitor information to enable them to adapt and respond to these changes.
- Analyse consumer usage of visitor information and monitor the effectiveness of various delivery mechanisms, particular new technology options.
- Provide guidance on best practice in innovation and excellence.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration with partners in the private and public sectors to produce increased cost-effectiveness.

Tenders should detail the proposed methodology for achieving these tasks.

10. Timetable
The timeframe for the study is:

Tender Submissions: **15th February 2013**
Interviews: **4th March 2013**
Selection: **7th March 2013**
Inception Meeting: **12th March 2013**
Study Completion: **19th July 2013**

11. Steering Group
There will be stakeholders meetings at the following points:
- Inception and approval of consultative process
- Discussion of Options
- Discussion of the draft Programme
More frequent meetings may be necessary with the Project Manager

The steering group shall comprise representatives of the following organisations:
- Sustainable Tourism Powys Team
- Powys County Council Tourism Team
- Brecon Beacons National Park Sustainable Tourism Team
- Other partners to be determined

12. Outputs
The following final outputs will be required:
- 5 bound copies of final report with an executive summary in English and Welsh
- Electronic version of final report

13. Project Management
The project manager is Martin Cooke, Sustainable Tourism Programmes and Marketing Manager.

14. Pre-tender Informal Discussions
For an informal pre-tender discussion, please contact the Project Manager on 01874 612278 or martin.cooke@powys.gov.uk. In the absence of Martin Cooke, Julie Lewis (Tourism and Marketing Manager Powys CC) can be contacted on 01874 612275 or email julie.a.lewis@powys.gov.uk

15. Costs and Contract
A maximum of £20,000 is available for this contract. Tendering organisations should indicate how they would provide value for money for their bid. The successful organisation would be required to enter into a formal contract to deliver the work.

16. Tender Submissions
- Consultants should carefully describe their approach. The Council will be pleased to receive tender submissions that include local expertise, knowledge and experience.
- The tender should be structured as detailed below:
  a. The experience of the company in undertaking this type of work
  b. The team members proposed (including any sub-contractors to be used), their qualifications, experience and a detailed breakdown of their role in the project;
  c. What data and other resources are available to you upon which to base the strategy;
  d. The approach which you propose to adopt in carrying out the work;
  e. A detailed breakdown of costs showing the number of days and daily rate of each team member, transport costs, meeting costs, copyright fees and production of all paperwork for each phase of the work;
  f. Any costs which are excluded from the tender.
  g. At least two references for similar work

17. Return of Tenders

- Written copies of the tender submission should be submitted. Additionally, submissions should be provided on a CD or USB Pen Drive, to allow for electronic dissemination.
- Tenders should be returned addressed to Martin Cooke at the address below and clearly marked '**Powys Visitor Information Plan Tender**' by 13.00 **on 15th February 2013**
- Tenders that arrive later than the 1300hrs deadline cannot be considered.
- Any queries relating to the tender procedure should be made to Martin Cooke Tel: 01874 612278 or Julie Lewis Tel: 01874 612275

  Tenders must be sent to:

  Martin Cooke
  Sustainable Tourism Programmes & Marketing Manager
  Powys County Council Tourism Section,
  Neuadd Brycheiniog,
  Cambrian Way,
  Brecon,
  Powys, LD3 7HR

18. Selection of Consultancy

- Selection will be based on cost, value for money and the quality of the submission/interview, based on the following criteria:
  - the tenderer's understanding of the brief;
  - the clarity and quality of the methodology proposed;
  - previous experience in this field of work
  - an assessment of the creativity likely to be brought to the work
  - value for money
  - the ability to work with a wide variety of stakeholders to the agreed timescale and deadlines.
- Powys CC does not commit itself to accepting to accepting the lowest or any quotation
- A shortlist of companies will be invited for interviews on **4th March 2013** in Brecon. Tenderers should keep this date clear until shortlisting has been completed.

The details and timings of payments will be agreed with the selected consultancy before work commences. The schedule of meetings will be agreed with the selected consultancy based on the indicative timetable outlined above.

As well as the conditions above tenders are subject to Powys County Council standard Terms and Conditions (copy supplied on request) and the conditions of the Rural Development Programme funding).