

6 November 2017

Lady Hallinan,
Chairperson
Newport Visitor Centre Action Group
c/o The Old Mill
Newport
SA42 0PL

Dear Lady Hallinan

Thank you for your recent letter regarding Newport TIC. I will try my best to address the points you have raised in turn.

Firstly, I wish to state emphatically that I have every confidence in the process that the Authority has followed to reach its decision. All three options that were discussed at the National Park Authority meeting on the 27th September were deemed 'valid' for consideration from the Authority's perspective. The Authority consulted with Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) regarding Option 3 prior to the above meeting and they were supportive of exploring this as a potential way forward in order to support an integrated visitor and library service in Newport. However, I readily accept that this option has now been rejected by the Newport Library Working Group and will not, therefore, be pursued by the Authority. This now means that there will be no TIC provision of any kind in Newport, however, we will continue to work with partners across North Pembrokeshire to provide Visitor information.

To suggest that Option 3 somehow 'undermined' both Option 1 and 2 put forward by two separate groups in Newport is wholly incorrect. As stated in the original paper, both Option 1 and 2 were based on the Authority retaining its current visitor services at the Long Street premises with minimal changes. This runs contrary to the desire of Members who agreed in September 2016 that they wished to "change the way information services are delivered in Newport" through consultation with the local community. As a result, both Options 1 and 2 failed to address the Authority's overarching desire to deliver a more equitable and less building dependent service across North Pembrokeshire.

With regards to the outline timetable, this was based on Members of the Authority accepting a proposal that would involve moving the library service from Bridge Street to the Authority's premises in Long Street. Any changes to library services are subject to a statutory consultation period in-line with the Welsh Government's 'Welsh Public Library Standards'. However, as the Authority's preferred option of integrating a



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*Yn hapus i gyfathrebu yn
Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg*

*Happy to communicate
in Welsh or English*

/cont...

TIC and library service at Bridge Street has now been rejected by Newport Library Working Group, there is no statutory requirement for PCNPA (and/or PCC) to undertake any further consultation. In addition, there are no statutory guidelines that require the Authority to consult further on changes to tourism services. A 10 month period of consultation and community engagement is deemed to be sufficient in this regard.

The Authority has always been clear, following the meeting in Dale last year, of its intention to withdraw from both the Tenby and Newport sites over a period of time. The Authority, therefore, embarked on a 10 month period of community engagement in Newport to 'explore new ways of delivering information services in order to invest in a package of new initiatives aimed at supporting the growth of the wider visitor economy in Pembrokeshire'. However, both Options 1 and 2 presented at the meeting on the 27th September 2017, were dependent on the Authority retaining the status quo. The decision by Members to close the public facing elements of the Newport Tourist Information Centre (TIC) is binding and we have no plans to revisit this decision. However, PCNPA staff will continue to hot-desk from the Long Street site until the future of the building is determined.

On a final note, you can rest assured that Members were provided with both up to date information relating to the performance of the TIC facility in Newport and had received a large volume of correspondence from various individuals and groups in Newport on this issue prior to the meeting on the 27th September 2017, including the letter of objection from the Newport Library Working Group. However, as the Authority has continually stated throughout the process, the desire to change the visitor services in Newport is not due to the 'under-performance' of the Newport TIC site and/or an urgent need to make savings across our visitor services (although budgets are tight). The changes are necessary in order to respond to the changing needs of visitors across the whole of the National Park and to provide a more equitable service across North Pembrokeshire.

In conclusion, the Authority will shortly be closing the Newport TIC service, in line with the decision of our Members, and will then consider options for the future disposal of the Long Street building in due course. As a result, the Authority will now focus on delivering this change and work with groups who have an interest in delivering an effective visitor information service for North Pembrokeshire.

Yours sincerely



Tegryn Jones
Chief Executive