

Notice of:	Cabinet Member for Tourism and Culture
Decision Number:	PH38/2021
Relevant Officer:	Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gillian Campbell, Cabinet Member for Tourism and Culture
Date of Decision:	13 April 2021

RESORT PASS – ON LINE SALES SYSTEM

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To replace the Resort Pass system by agreeing to work with Blackpool Pleasure Beach to trial a new on line sales system for selling third party product and tickets and to pilot the system by pre-purchasing Pleasure Beach passes.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To work with Blackpool Pleasure Beach to trial a resort wide ticketing platform.
- 2.2 To pre-purchase up to £500,000 of Blackpool Pleasure Beach e-tickets for resale to use to trial the system and to delegate any further changes to the scheme to the Director of Communications and Regeneration in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 During the periods of COVID restrictions it became impossible to continue with the resort pass due to the requirement to pre-book arrival times and the reduced capacity. Resort pass is paper based and does not allow flexibility of changing content and the facility to be used in a contactless way so was in many senses out of date in any case.

The new system will allow a small surplus to be made on each ticket which will go some way towards meeting the income lost from resort pass sales.

The resort wide ticketing platform will allow us to experiment with other forms of collated ticket/accommodation/travel and other sales to create packages for the benefit of the visitor or resident wishing to organise their stay.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 To not provide any collated package system. This would be a lost opportunity especially when people are looking for cost certainty in planning their breaks. It would also be a step backwards for the resort.

To consider a third party supplier to carry out this function. There would of course be a cost to this and we would have to get attractions and other offers to sign up to the supplier and their commission levels. This would be difficult if not impossible to achieve.

To pursue a joint online sales system to support a replacement for Resort Pass as a means for providing customers with collated tickets and experiences. Testing the system initially with the selling of pre-purchased Pleasure Beach e-tickets on the new online sales system.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is: "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool".

6.0 Background information

6.1 A replacement for Resort Pass is required as COVID arrangements do not allow the old paper based system to function under the new regulations. Officers then need to test the system once it has been set up on a large scale basis to ensure that it is robust. Any online system needs to be tested if it is going to involve the general public to ensure that all scenarios are tested and that the system can cope with sudden surges in demand. This will take most of the season in 2021. Officers will then be able to assess if there were any shortfalls in the system before moving to introduce further offers. The success will be measured by the demand for customers to use it and the ability of the system to cope.

6.2 If no alternative is in place there will be a gap in the market for packages. Pre-paid packages are very much what many visitors and customers desire to ensure that their leisure trip is both organised and fixed price.

6.3 The resort pass has been running for more than 5 years and has grown in popularity with almost 20,000 sales in the last full active year. There was always going to be a need to replace the system as it does not support a paperless and contactless approach to ticketing and in essence is out of date.

6.4 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 There will be a purchase of tickets and this will amount to in excess of 15,000. These will allow the onward sale at a small surplus to replace the shortfall in funding due to the cessation of resort pass. Officers anticipate this level of sales in year one but if not we will be able to trigger a further 2 years to sell the acquired tickets to reduce the risk to the Council.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 An agreement will be in place to protect the Council from financial risk and this has been checked and agreed by the Council's legal services team.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There is a financial risk but this has been mitigated by the potential for further discounts and an extended time period to sell the tickets should this prove necessary. If the Council does not proceed there will be a consequential loss of business to the Council and to the town.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 Tickets will be available to all and the service provided by the visitBlackpool Team

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 With Resources Department, Legal Services, visitBlackpool and the Portfolio Holder

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 N/A

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? No

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed:

Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1 None.

19.0 Executive decision:

19.1 The Cabinet Member agreed the recommendations as outlined above namely:

1. To work with Blackpool Pleasure Beach to trial a resort wide ticketing platform.

2. To pre-purchase up to £500,000 of Blackpool Pleasure Beach e-tickets for resale to use to trial the system and to delegate any further changes to the scheme to the Director of Communications and Regeneration in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

20.0 Date of Decision:

20.1 13 April 2021

21.0 Reason(s) for decision:

21.1 During the periods of COVID restrictions it became impossible to continue with the resort pass due to the requirement to pre-book arrival times and the reduced capacity. Resort pass is paper based and does not allow flexibility of changing content and the facility to be used in a contactless way so was in many senses out of date in any case.

The new system will allow a small surplus to be made on each ticket which will go some way towards meeting the income lost from resort pass sales.

The resort wide ticketing platform will allow the Council to experiment with other forms of collated ticket/accommodation/travel and other sales to create packages for the benefit of the visitor or resident wishing to organise their stay.

22.0 Date Decision published:

22.1 13 April 2021

23.0 Executive Members in attendance:

23.1

24.0 Call-in:

24.1

25.0 Notes:

25.1