

## Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 February 2019</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Thame Town Council Official Town Guide</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Becky Reid, Market Town Co-ordinator</b>

### Purpose of Report

1. To inform Councillors that we plan to bring our annual Official Town Guide in-house, overseeing the whole project from design through to distribution. (As also mentioned at the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee on 29 January 2019).

### 2. History

For over 8 years Thame Town Council has commissioned Local Authority Publishing Co Ltd (LAP) to produce and distribute a town guide for us. This has been at no financial cost to us, but has involved the time of Officers to create and provide editorial copy and relevant photos. We have been allowed a maximum of 14 pages. The rest is filled up with advertising that covers LAP's costs and allows them to make a profit.

### 3. Proposed change

This year we would like to bring this project in house, allowing us complete control over the design and layout of the Guide. The guide will include all the content it currently has, but will be presented using themes to help readers clearly and easily find out about different aspects of life in Thame. This will also allow readers to more easily pick out content that is of particular interest to them, as well as enabling them to find out more about services and businesses that meet their needs in the town.

### 4. Reasons for this change

There are several reasons for this proposed change

4.1. As there is no requirement from us to make a profit from this work, we will be able to include more editorial content. This will allow us to provide a guide that has more information that is useful to our residents, and ensure that relevant community groups and events are given a higher profile.

4.2. Part of the work of the Market Town Co-Ordinator (MTCO) is to develop and implement a Welcome Pack to new residents. The focus was originally to create something that could be distributed to new estates, however this would mean that new residents who move into old estates/houses in Thame would not benefit. By improving the annual Town Guide, we will be able to also meet the needs of a useful Welcome Pack, allowing this target from the Town Centre Working Group, to be met for years to come.

4.3. Many businesses in the town centre have expressed that residents and visitors to Thame do not know about them. The MTCO has also regularly identified people 'looking for recommendations' through social media for services that are available in Thame, and being signposted to other local towns such as Princes Risborough to meet their needs, rather than being encouraged to come to a business in Thame. By having control over the lay out of the guide we will ensure that information (and where relevant adverts) will be placed next to relevant editorial, ensuring targeted exposure for business. By ensuring that customers find out about what is available in Thame, they are less likely to make their way to other destinations to meet their needs. If we can provide this information to them and encourage additional trips to Thame, then the town as a whole will benefit from the inevitable linked

shopping trips that will occur, keeping our high street vibrant. Current advertising includes schools in Oxford and we think this space should be devoted to Thame based businesses.

- 4.4. The Visitor Economy Working Group believes that the content of the Town Guide needs to be improved so that it is more in line with the Guide available to visitors to and residents of Henley. This guide is more informative, painting an interesting and detailed picture of life in Henley and how to make the most of all it has to offer. By re-designing the Thame guide we will end up with a booklet that provides more reasons for visitors to spend time in Thame, and it has been proven that the longer people spend in an area, the more money they are likely to spend. It will also give a higher profile to activities in Thame that residents may not know about or have yet to visit, such as the Museum and The Players theatre, meeting the targets of this working group

## 5. Implications of delivering this project in-house

- 5.1. A new map will need to be designed for the central pages of the booklet. However we will own the copyright for this map. Previously we have had to seek permission to use this map in other circumstances, however due to our ownership of GIS software, we have the ability to create a map at minimum cost that will meet the same standards as the current map. We will have the right to use this in whatever way we need to going forward
- 5.2. The guide will no-longer be delivered to local businesses. The information we plan to provide is to benefit the residents of Thame, therefore we felt that this was no longer a priority.
- 5.3. Time implication: Although no more time will be needed for gathering the content and photos (as we do this already), more time will need to spent to layout and design the overall booklet, and more time will need to be spent promoting the advertising opportunity to businesses. The MTCO has had a recent increase in hours which allows for this time, and the time being devoted to this project would have been needed to develop a separate Welcome Pack were we not able to combine them.

## 6. Costs

The additional costs associated with bringing this project in house are outlined below. Conservative estimates suggest that these will easily be covered by advertising income, allowing a small profit that can be invested in continuing to ensure the vibrancy and vitality of our town.

£300 towards the design of a new map  
 £6690 towards printing of 8000 guides  
 £357 towards distribution to each home in Thame

## 7. Risks

- 7.1. Lack of advertising to cover costs. At time of writing this report we have started to scope interest from businesses. We have already secured interest from 6 businesses, leading to a potential income of £1175 towards the project. This is within 3 days of asking.
- 7.2. Too much time needed to create the guide. This year the project will be more time consuming than in future years, as we create and design the layout and content, as well as adverts. However once it is done, future years will be far more efficient as there will be less changes needed to the main template. The advertising costs we have set will allow us to out-source some of the design work if necessary. We are also able to draw on work already completed to inform the content, making the most of work already undertaken.

**Action Required:** To note the report