

Subject: Implementing the Tourism Marketing
Action Plan

Status: For Publication

Report to: The Cabinet

Date: October 2007

Report of: Head of Regeneration

Portfolio

Holder: Regenerating and Promoting Rossendale.

Key Decision: No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To update member on the position with respect to the implementation of the Borough's Tourism Marketing Action Plan.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters discussed in this report are linked to and support the following corporate priorities:

- *Promoting Rossendale as a cracking place to live and visit. The Tourism Marketing Action Plan was commissioned as a direct response to an agreed understanding that Rossendale's position in the tourism and visitor markets is underplayed and therefore the potential of the Borough's tourism and visitor assets are not being maximized. As a result tourism is not being used as a key economic driver in the Borough and opportunities to promote the Borough are being lost. Outcome 4.2 of the Corporate Plan – A Thriving Visitor Economy aims to increase the number of visitor stays in the Borough and within the actions includes 'appropriate monitoring of the tourism contract to ensure that it increases the number of business partnerships with improved tourism offerings and increases the number of people visiting the Borough.*
- *Delivering Regeneration Across the Borough. Tourism and the visitor economy have an increasingly important role to play in delivering economic development and regeneration supporting investment, jobs and businesses as well as enhancing the profile and image of areas.*

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 At its meeting on 19th September 2006 Cabinet agreed to a consultancy approach to delivering actions linked to promoting the Borough and improving visitor information. At the same time they delegated approval to the appropriate Heads of Service, in consultation with the Lead Member for Regeneration, to appoint consultants to undertake the work. Subsequently, following an appropriate selection process, Brighter Business Solutions (BBS) were appointed to undertake this work.

4.2 Brighter Business Solutions started the work on an initial five month contract in November 2006. This contract was subsequently extended in March 2006 to ensure continuity in the provision of the work and services that BBS were undertaking. Whilst this extension was given for a further two years, at a charge of £40,000 per annum, there is an opportunity to review the contract at six monthly intervals. The initial sixth month review period finished at the end of September. Through the process of the review the Borough Council has worked with the Tourism Steering Group of the Local Strategic Partnership to consider progress to-date and develop an appropriate work programme for the next six month period.

4.3 The brief for the initial contract period, November 2006 – March 2007 required BBS to make progress against a number of key actions including

- re-invigorating the Rossendale Partnership's Tourism Working Group,
- increasing collaboration between private sector partners,
- developing relationships between the public and private sectors,
- working with tourism related businesses to improve the Borough's tourism offer and
- delivering some early wins in respect of promotional materials.

4.4 Against this brief BBS have delivered and achieved a number of notable successes including:

- the establishment of a dedicated telephone line for tourism enquiries from both businesses and visitors/potential visitors
- a re-invigorated Tourism Working Group (now re-named the Tourism Steering Group) that meets every two months with a good core of members. Recent attempts have been made to increase the representation on the group by tourism operators.
- A robust working relationship with Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board which is generating opportunities for Rossendale to become involved in wider activity and in particular in their

campaigns e.g. Taste Lancashire (4 out of 10 products in Taste Lancashire Hamper are from Rossendale).

- Instigation of a brochure swap shop to support networking opportunities amongst tourism businesses and to provide a mechanism for circulating information across businesses in the absence of a formal Tourist Information Centre.
- A joint approach to the launch and production of promotional material for the Halo.
- Progress in developing a number of key cluster groups including the establishment of an accommodation forum, support to the Rural Rossendale Group, particularly around bringing forward the Rossendale Walking Festival, and work around bringing together clusters around 'attractions' and 'food and drink'.
- Familiarisation Trips including the Society of American Travel Writers and North West Vision
- Leading on a number of television enquiries including ones from Place in the Sun and Go North West
- Maintenance of the tourism website and training undertaken to support overhauling the website and how information is presented within it.
- Good working relationships formed with key people, both within other organisations and agencies but also with tourism businesses themselves. Of particular note is the work that has been undertaken with accommodation providers to get their accommodation 'quality marked'.

4.5 In reviewing the potential work programme the Economic Regeneration Manager acting as client for the work, and the Tourism Steering Group, have agreed to continue to develop the work under five key headings:

- Continuing to develop and support the Tourism Steering Group
- Providing Tourism Information Services
- Promotion and Marketing
- Building Relationships
- Building the Tourism Offer.

Through consultation with the Steering Group a particular emphasis over the next six months will be placed on supporting successful events (as part of building the offer), producing an updated (and self-financing) visitor guide and raising the profile of the Borough through building the relationship with local, regional and national media in respect of promoting the borough as a tourism and visitor destination, in addition to the on-going work that BBS are undertaking.

4.6 A further key area over the next six months will be in developing appropriate mechanisms for assessing the impact of, not only this contract, but the on-going work of the Tourism Steering Group.

- 4.7 To support the delivery of this work it is proposed to allocate £10,000 in both the current year and next year to support actions that will help deliver the council's corporate priority of 'Promoting Rossendale as a Cracking Place to Live and Visit'. This allocation would be met from the resources that the Borough Council have received through LABGIS (Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme). It would potentially support a range of actions including involvement in the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board campaigns and contributing to the STEAM model.

5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE

- 5.1 In extending this contract a £4k shortfall has been identified which has initially been funded from savings in other areas.

6. COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY SERVICES

- 6.1 The Agreement with Brighter Business Solutions has already been extended to 31 March 2009.

7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 There are no specific Human Resource implications.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Promoting Rossendale continues to be a key priority of the Borough Council and of the wider Rossendale Partnership and there is a growing momentum to the work of the Tourism Steering Group which is supported in no small part by BBS through this contract. The extension to the contract that was granted in March has ensured continuity in the provision of services that itself has contributed to an increased feeling that tourism and visitor services are becoming better focused, more co-ordinated and positively driven. The continued review of the work plan by the Economic Regeneration Manager in consultation with the Tourism Steering Group should ensure that it remains both dynamic and relevant.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 9.1 Cabinet notes and agree the content of this report.
- 9.2 That £10,000 per annum be allocated in the current and next financial year, from the Borough Council's LABGIS allocation, to support the promotion and marketing of the Borough and that delegated authority for allocating this resource be granted to the Head of Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regenerating and Promoting Rossendale.
- 9.3 That consideration is given to appointing a member 'champion' for tourism who can work with the Regeneration Team and the Tourism Steering Group towards improving the borough's tourism and visitor offer.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 Rossendale Regeneration Board and the LSP Tourism Steering Group.

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Tourism Marketing Action Plan for Rossendale – November 2005	Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing Service files
Report to Cabinet – Implementing The Tourism Marketing Action Plan, Head of Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing – September 2006	