

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Huntingdonshire Marketing Strategy

Meeting/Date: CMT – 23rd June 2015
O&S Economic well-being – 9TH July 2015
Cabinet – 16th July 2015

Executive Portfolio: Strategic Economic Development and Legal,
Cllr Roger Harrison

Report by: Head of Development
Andy Moffat

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013- 2023 was approved by the Cabinet in July 2013. One of the key short-term (1-3 year) actions contained therein was the development of a Marketing Strategy for the promotion of the District as a location of choice to live, work and invest.

External expertise has been procured to assist with the development of the strategy itself, branding, a website and marketing materials. The first phase of this work is the development of the Marketing Strategy and the branding design. The draft document attached is the Marketing Strategy, a document to guide the economic development team in the development of marketing materials and the implementation of a marketing campaign. It identifies the target audience segments for the campaign, how to access them and the key messages to be delivered. It contains examples of the proposed branding design as they would be applied to the web site and promotional materials but is not in itself an external facing document. The design samples included in the Marketing Strategy attached have evolved following consultation with officers, members and private sector partners.

Once this Marketing Strategy and branding profile has been approved by the Cabinet, the preparation of the external facing marketing materials will begin.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended

- That Members endorse the implementation of this Marketing Strategy and Branding profile for the promotion of Huntingdonshire.

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1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval for a Marketing Strategy and branding which will be used to promote the district and attract high skilled workers and inward investment to Huntingdonshire.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In July 2013 the Cabinet approved the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan (HEGP) and its short, medium and longer term deliver plan. In order to achieve the objectives set out in the HEGP, a key action identified was the need for a Marketing Strategy to ensure the effective promotion of the District as a location of choice to live, work and invest.

- 2.2 Since the approval of the HEGP there have been some areas of change and potential change to the economic development landscape which have impacted on progress with this action. These relate to: the Cambridgeshire Public Sector Board review of economic development and related services delivery across the County geography; HDC's strategic partnership with South Cambs DC; and developing roles and responsibilities of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

- 2.3 Together these circumstances led to the senior management decision to hold any significant expenditure of resource on the development of a marketing campaign for the promotion of the district as this would be a longer term project which may need to be done together with partners across a wider geography. However, no agreement has yet been reached on the sharing of place marketing activities across wider geographies. Further, over a geography as wide as the LEP's, the developing of a compelling unique selling point and key messages to encompass the diversity of the component districts would be extremely difficult to achieve. As a consequence and given the upturn in national economic outlook the hold has now been lifted and work is underway on the development of a marketing strategy, branding and promotional materials to attract inward investment and high skilled workers to Huntingdonshire.

- 2.4 Following a competitive tender process, external expertise has been procured to assist with the development of the strategy itself, branding, a website and marketing materials. The first phase of this work is the development of the Marketing Strategy and the branding design. The draft document attached is the Marketing Strategy, a document to guide the economic development team in the development of marketing materials and the implementation of a marketing campaign. It identifies the target audience segments for the campaign, how to access them and the key messages to be delivered. It contains examples of the proposed branding design as they would be applied to the web site and promotional materials but is not in itself an external facing document.

- 2.5 In line with the HEGP's ambitious vision to make Huntingdonshire on the top 10 places in England to live, work and invest by 2023 the branding and strategy also need to be ambitious and innovative.

- 2.6 Once this Marketing Strategy and branding profile has been approved by the Cabinet, the preparation of the external facing marketing materials will begin.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED / ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The process of developing the strategy and branding materials has included a review of other place marketing websites and brands. This work concluded that in the absence of a single iconic image that would really promote the district to all three target audiences a computer generated image would be the best option. This should be supplemented on the web-site particularly with photographic images as appropriate to the focus of each landing page.

It was also considered whether the logo should be a stand-alone logo, which would require a change to the Council's corporate branding policy, or whether the logo should be co-branded with the existing council logo. The later was deemed to be most appropriate.

A series of workshops and consultations were then conducted (see 8 below) and feedback and comments taken on board where possible in the evolution of the branding. It should be noted that as with all such subjective decisions, opinions have been diverse but private sector consultees were on the whole more supportive of the design as developed in the document attached.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

- 4.1 To be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel at its meeting on 9th July and comments will be circulated thereafter.

5. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS?

- 5.1 The main impact of the Strategy will be its contribution the delivery of the HEGP by successfully promoting Huntingdonshire as a location of choice to live, work and invest. It will encourage the relocation of the high skilled workers that our businesses need to achieve their growth potential; it will encourage the (re)location of business investment into the district to help us diversify and uplift our local economy and thus improve its future resilience.

The more ambitious elements of the Strategy are potentially dependant on the identification of external funding and at a time of ever decreasing public sector allocation, this offers a possible risk. Equally, the opportunity to fully exploit the aspirations of the Strategy will be impacted by the ability to, and success of, achieving private sector "buy in" and identification of potential jointly funded projects.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 If the recommendation of this report is approved in July, key milestone actions will be:
- Commissioning of Marketing collateral and materials – **Summer 2015**
 - Website development – **Autumn 2015**
 - Website Launch – **Winter 2015**

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

- 7.1 The Strategy is directly linked to the Corporate Plan's Vision and delivery of the Strong Local Economy Theme - principally promoting inward investment, supporting Alconbury EZ, and addressing future skills needs - and to a lesser extent to the Enabling Sustainable Growth theme.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 A variety of differing audiences have been targeted to canvass views on the Branding and Profile element of the Huntingdonshire Marketing Strategy including Senior Executive Officers, Council Members, Partner organisations and private sector representatives including the Chambers of Commerce, BID Huntingdon and Urban & Civic.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The cost of the initial development of the Huntingdonshire Marketing Strategy, branding and initial materials design was budgeted for in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 budget at a total cost of £18,500 for:

- Strategic marketing plan
- Brand creation/ key messages/ infographics
- Set up of content managed web-site
- E-newsletter HTML template
- Pull up banner creative
- Marketing brochure

- 9.2 In addition £4,000 is allocated in the 2015/16 budget for the printing and purchase of promotional materials, pull up banners, attendance at business to business fairs and some advertising of the campaign launch.

- 9.3 A further sum of £4,200 p.a. is currently budgeted for an ongoing web-site maintenance contract and search engine optimisation (to ensure the web-site ranks highly in browser search results). This is not however, committed to at this stage.

- 9.4 The further allocation of economic development budget to this project will depend upon the outcome the imminent ZBB process.

- 9.5 In summary, current budget and human resource allocations will enable those items in bold below (the list from p.15 of the strategy) to go ahead on approval of the Strategy:

- **Website**
- **E-Newsletters**
- Online advertising
- **E-Brochures**
- **Social Media**
- **Press advertising**
- **Printed Brochure Marketing Collateral**
- **Partner Collaboration Collateral for events and meetings**
- Promotional Videos
- **Exterior Banners**
- Exhibition Graphics Interactive Touch Screen Table
- Branded Team wear – Polo shirts, Smart shirts, Sweatshirts
- **Branded Pens, USBs Mugs Biodegradable Promotional Carrier Bags Sweets, Helium Balloons**
- Mobile Ad vans
- HDC fleet vehicle livery
- Black Cab Advertising / Livery
- Stagecoach and Guided Bus Advertising / Livery

- Key Transport Spot Advertising - Train Stations, Airports, Bus Stations and London Underground
- Shopping Centre Advertising

9.5 Identification of externally funding opportunities will need to be found for longer term commitments and more aspirational/costly campaigns and activity.

9.6 These possible funding avenues include local and regional private sector organisations with commonality of interest in promoting Huntingdonshire e.g. Developers, housing associations, property agents, recruitment agencies, sector and business networks as well as regional and national government and sector funding streams.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

10.1 Recommendation is sought due to:

- The development of a Marketing Strategy is an identifiable action arising from the approved Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013-2023.
- Consultation with both internal and external audience has demonstrated a clear and universal support for the need to promote Huntingdonshire as a place to Live, Work and Invest.
- An increasingly competitive location environment requires a business facing, proactive Marketing Strategy with supporting brand and collateral.

11. RECOMMENDATION

That Members endorse the implementation of this Marketing Strategy and Branding profile for the promotion of Huntingdonshire.

12. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Huntingdonshire Marketing Strategy

CONTACT OFFICER

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