

**Body:** Cabinet

**Date:** 16 July 2014

**Subject:** Eastbourne Brand Development: A Shared Identity

**Report of:** Senior Head of Tourism & Leisure

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose:** To appoint an external specialist to work with the Council and partners to create a shared brand and identity for the town.

**Decision Type:** Non-key

**Recommendation:**

1. To note the contents of this report and delegate authority to the Senior Head of Tourism & Leisure, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Tourism & Leisure, to procure a suitably experienced brand agency to undertake the work;
2. To authorise expenditure of up to £30,000 from the economic regeneration fund to fund this work.

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## **1.0 Background**

1.1 Eastbourne has a long term vision that by 2027 the town will be a premier seaside resort with a prosperous economy and thriving community. Tourism, Leisure and Economic Development (TLED) are identified as key functions of the Authority in achieving this vision and a joint strategy is under development. This strategy identifies the following as being key to our success:

- Supporting business growth within the local area
- Supporting a skilled workforce through education
- Improved road and rail infrastructure
- Improving sustainability
- A desirable tourism and leisure destination
- Creating an outstanding seaside resort and gateway to the South Downs National Park
- Increasing Eastbourne's share of global visitor markets
- Championing a successful thriving tourism industry
- Delivering a consistent brand message
- Maximising tourism's contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life.

1.2 Eastbourne Borough Council will need to rise to the challenges presented by unprecedented pressures on the public purse and discretionary services

to sustain its position as a premier resort, attracting inward investment, visitors, businesses and a skilled workforce and 'brand' is therefore a priority area for development.

- 1.3 The South Downs National Park has recently completed its own brand development work, following the same principles, which has resulted in a design guide to help promote the identity of the area and sense of place. The research, consultation and outcomes of that work are especially valuable, and we welcome the National Park Authority's plans to develop a Shared Identity Toolkit, which we will use to inform our own work. The Authority's positive approach to working with partners such as the Council will positively inform our timetable and desired outcomes. We will also look to follow the National Park's approach in terms of exploring options for protecting, through mechanisms such as copyright, trademarking or design registration, the Eastbourne brand that emerges from this work.
- 1.4 To realise the vision for Eastbourne and the priorities within the Tourism, Leisure and Economic Development (TLED) strategy, we need to develop a brand that inspires and represents quality, efficiency and delivery. We want Eastbourne to be a landmark town where everyone wants to be.
- 1.5 Visitor Economy research compiled by TNS in 2012 included a study of our visitor market. One of the key findings from this research identified that 'Eastbourne was trying to be all things to all people' without a clear identity and obvious brand recognition. Whilst Eastbourne enjoys the recognition of being the 'Sunniest place in the UK' and this strapline is widely used on promotional literature, a Brand mapping and development exercise needs to be completed to establish an all encompassing brand identity that is authentic, recognised, embraced and represented by our residential and business community.

## **2.0 The Commission**

- 2.1 We will appoint an experienced brand development professional to work with the Borough Council, its stakeholders and community representatives to help us define the 'Eastbourne Brand', as a credible and authentic identity that will set the scene for the overarching marketing and communications plan for the Borough and which can be communicated through a number of channels, assisting us in promoting our objectives to be a premier tourist destination and excellent place to live and to do business.
- 2.1 The aims of this commission are to:
- Conduct an agreed number of consultations with elected Members and stakeholders to fully understand the context and scope of opportunity, generate ownership, 'buy-in' and support;
  - Undertake an audit of the variety of logos, straplines, marketing collateral and platforms in use by the Council and stakeholders at any given time;
  - Assess the Council and its partners' performance against existing 'brands', key messages and marketing;
  - Develop and produce a recognisable 'brand' for Eastbourne that embodies the spirit of the town, its attractions and aspirations which

is credible and able to be owned by its communities and stakeholders;

- Develop and present a suite of marketing materials to demonstrate how the brand can be communicated to diverse audiences through design and marketing campaigns.

2.2 The objectives are, as much as possible, to:

- Develop a credible and authentic identity for Eastbourne which embodies and conveys the ambition of the borough, its heritage and uniqueness;
- Deliver clear recommendations on brand, use of multiple platforms and campaigns regarding the diverse audiences and purpose of communication
- Produce a design guide for the Council which is suitable for print, digital and multi-media campaigns

2.2 As an extension of the consideration to brand architecture, the brand agency is also required to develop a solution to two issues:

**i Brand identity usage and ownership.**

For this place-brand to grow we are aware that it is desirable to encourage consistent use of the brand by as many businesses, organisations and communities as possible. On the other hand, because we have much less control over the place 'product' than brand managers of consumer goods, we need to consider whether we apply controls to the usage of the brand reflecting our status as a visitor, resident or business destination, because the brand needs to represent a quality experience, a quality environment and sustainability. In some national brand examples, they have a tiered process which allows any business to access the marketing guidelines but require criteria to be met or a code of conduct / promise / pledge to be developed to allow full usage of the brand identity including the logo. This is reserved for what can be considered 'brand partners' or 'brand ambassadors' signed up to a set of core values.

**ii Eastbourne brand vs Borough Council brand.**

The Borough Council is the key enabling body delivering the purposes and duty of the Local Authority but it is distinct from the town as a place or a tourism destination. Therefore the agency is required to work with the Authority to clarify and define the relationship between both ourselves and the wider town, in terms of how these are both visually expressed. This will require rationalising the brands, their definitions and their relationships, clarifying the messages from each other and for each target audience segment.

2.3 Differentiating between both might be desirable for some audiences and in some legal and administration situations. However, in terms of perception, too much differentiation in brand identity and look and feel may divorce the Authority from the landscape it was put in place to promote and protect. On the other hand, not enough differentiation may limit shared use of the brand by stakeholders, if it is perceived to be a corporate brand for the Council. It is important that this project delivers a solution to this issue.

2.4 The aims of this commission are to:

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- Assess the Council and its partners' performance against existing 'brands', key messages and marketing;
- Develop and produce a recognisable 'brand' for Eastbourne that embodies the spirit of the town, its attractions and aspirations which is credible and able to be owned by its communities and stakeholders;
- Develop and present a suite of marketing materials to demonstrate how the brand can be communicated to diverse audiences through design and marketing campaigns.

### **3.0 Financial Implications**

3.1 This work was originally considered as part of a larger commission to undertake the visitor economy research; devise an action plan based strategy for marketing and formulate a brand. At the time Members considered it prudent to split the research from the development work and so there is already a large body of evidence and information to support the commission, as well as a strategy in production. Therefore, based on similar commissions and the costs of the recent work undertaken by the National Park, a budget of £30,000 is requested to undertake this programme, which will be procured in line with the Council's contract procedure rules to ensure best value principles are met.

### **4.0 Consultation**

4.1 The commission will require several presentations and workshops to fully explore the parameters and encourage user groups and stakeholders to engage with the work. The number and content of the presentations and workshops will be agreed and published in good time. It is anticipated that at the very least, a presentation to Members and workshops with local heritage, business, access and community groups will need to be undertaken.

4.2 This commission is the direct result of the Visitor Economy Study which entailed visitors, residents and non-visitors telling us about their activity and perceptions of Eastbourne. The results of the study have been presented to stakeholders such as the Eastbourne Hospitality Association and Chamber of Commerce, elected members and the public on several occasions and the desire to develop a cohesive brand and shared identity is welcomed.

### **5.0 Timetable**

5.1 We aim to advertise the commission immediately, pending Cabinet approval of the budget and scope of work so that the successful agency can produce the outcomes in time for implementation from March 2015.

## **6.0 Equalities and Fairness**

- 6.1 The brief and consultation process highlights the Council's commitment to equalities and fairness. Consultation and engagement will ensure representation from the widest community profile possible, with any design outcomes open for scrutiny in terms of accessibility.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

- 7.1 Eastbourne is a much loved town in which to live and do business, as well as being a premier visitor destination, with a rich mix of architectural and environmental treasures, natural and cultural attractions. This combination stands it in good stead to face the challenges of diminishing resources and market competition, which can be enhanced further by engaging as many people as possible in agreeing our shared identity and enabling that identity to be shared and promoted by all. Harnessing the energy and passion of residents, local businesses and key stakeholders (including colleagues in other Sussex destinations, the County Council and governing bodies such as the Lawn Tennis Association and Arts Council) will benefit the town and generate satisfaction and awareness in target markets, be they prospective residents, day or overnight visitors to the town or businesses considering investment opportunities.
- 7.2 An independent agency with the right level of experience will enable the work to be undertaken openly and inclusively without it being perceived as a Council public relations exercise.
- 7.3 Cabinet is asked to endorse the project and agree the recommendations.

### **Lead Officers**

Annie Wills, Tourism Development, Heritage and Catering Manager  
Lisa Rawlinson, Senior Specialist Advisor

### **Background Papers:**

Visitor Economy Study

The Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.