

Open Report on behalf of Executive Director for Communities

Report to:	Economic Scrutiny Committee
Date:	29 October 2013
Subject:	Place Marketing including Communications Strategy

Summary:

This paper sets out the purpose and objectives of marketing the County, and the concept of Place Marketing, to enable Members to discuss priorities and focus for marketing activities. It describes existing marketing, promotion and communications activities undertaken by Economy and Culture and Strategic Communications Services within Lincolnshire County Council to support discussion on resources available for Marketing and Communications. The paper sets this in the context of parallel discussions that have been taking place through the Greater Lincolnshire Local Economic Partnership (GLLEP) on marketing and tourism promotion.

Actions Required:

Members are asked:

1. To note and comment on activity undertaken to date.
2. To give views on priorities, and ways to increase and make best use of resources.

1. Background

Purpose and Objectives of Marketing the County

The purpose of promoting any area is to attract and retain investment which increases income and prosperity for residents and businesses and creates a high quality of life. Within that overall aim, objectives for individual locations need to be achievable and address particular opportunities or needs, specific to that area.

A strong economy, natural assets, scale and critical mass of population and businesses all provide sound bases upon which to attract further investment. Areas which lack, or have lost, these attributes tend to suffer competitive disadvantage in trying to attract external investment and local economic drivers cannot compensate. A change of image can be a valid objective to increase

investment, but the image built needs to be based on reality and takes time and resources to achieve.

From research, and anecdotally, Lincolnshire does not have a poor image, but there is a **lack** of image and awareness about the area. Its strengths are unrecognised by many, and there is a relatively weak proposition that investors can "buy into", which is restricting growth potential. This is not uncommon; many areas have a similar lack of strong, instantly recognisable identity, and it can be costly to create. Coupled with a lack of critical mass to generate wealth and investment from within, related low levels of private sector development and relatively high infrastructure costs, the circle is hard to break without attracting external investment.

The County has real sector specific economic strengths (the visitor economy, agri-food and manufacturing), and natural and heritage assets that add to a high quality of life that is valued by those in the know, but not obvious to those not experiencing it. There is also a strong new message to develop and sell as Lincolnshire's proposition - that high quality growth is planned and welcomed to benefit the area – and people can get involved in creating an aspirational business and lifestyle location which builds on the area's natural and economic assets – Lincoln is the lead attractor.

Other parts of the County need a different emphasis, including more sector targeting, but can also fit under a broad proposition to build image and awareness. Notably, the Lincolnshire Coast, and housing/employment relationships with North and North East Lincolnshire and east of the County offer emerging opportunities.

In Central Lincolnshire, 42,800 homes are planned with a population growth of 86,000 by 2031 and 210 hectares of employment land. With Lincoln allocated 18,800 dwellings (44% of total), this is around a 40,000 increase in population. Put another way, it's like incorporating a town the scale of Grantham into the Lincoln area within 20 years. The proportional increase of growth for Gainsborough is even greater, with significant plans too for Sleaford, Grantham and Spalding.

Lessons from other areas show that an integrated approach, and marketing resources, can deliver balanced growth (housing, employment, leisure and retail facilities etc), rather than the creation of dormitory settlements. It is necessary to attract a range of people and organisations to buy in to Lincolnshire – those that will invest and deliver new facilities and infrastructure and those that will work, live, learn and visit here - and it is important also to value those that already do so. Target audiences include:

- Investors and developers who provide properties which create good quality jobs
- Tourists which lead to more investment in tourist facilities and therefore more jobs and wealth
- Business decision makers who are already here to have confidence to invest here because they know that the county's economy is growing.

Lincolnshire based organisations (Public and Private sectors) have told LCC and GLLEP that they want the area to be promoted more to benefit them in a number of ways, including attracting skilled, professional and managerial workers to relocate to the area.

It is not enough to tell people about the Lincolnshire proposition, it is also necessary to 'seal the deal', so marketing has to be backed up with effective sales to convert the interest and then ensure that the Lincolnshire decision lives up to expectations. The principles of place making, place marketing and destination management for tourism all follow this marketing and sales approach.

LCC's Economy Service span all aspects, from facilitating development, helping to improve the product, building partnerships which provide services and information, to ensuring businesses have access to support they need. More can be done, but the scale of resources is quite limited, particularly from the private sector, compared to the ambitions of the area.

The Concept of Place Marketing – and developing the approach with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Economic Partnership (GLLEP)

As Members will be aware, Economy and Culture Officers are involved in the development and drafting of the Economic Plan on behalf of the GLLEP, and the Economic Scrutiny Committee has considered priorities which are shaping the plan. Marketing and promotion has been confirmed as a priority activity from a number of discussions and work.

In September 2013, a paper on Place Marketing was discussed at the GLLEP Board. This is available for reference. It confirmed the importance given by Lincolnshire businesses to promotion of the area, and the link between Visitor Promotion and wider place marketing. The definition of Place Marketing, as set out by Visit England, is:

Place Making: A multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. This can include aspects such as information, interpretation, events, community and business engagement etc. as well as physical appearance and facilities.

Place Marketing: The application of marketing and branding strategies and tactics to destinations in order to attract investment and income. This latter may arise from attracting new business, tourists, residential expansion and other development and activity.

The GLLEP Board agreed that a task and finish group should develop the place marketing approach and report back by January so that Place Marketing becomes a priority activity within the Economic Plan. LCC officers are facilitating that work.

In July 2013, a draft Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan (DMS) was considered by the GLLEP Board, following agreement that the visitor economy was a top three sector priority; work to develop the DMS was led by Chris Baron from Butlins.

The plan sets out **the vision for tourism in Lincolnshire** - "By 2020 tourism will be recognised as having made a real and positive change to Lincolnshire's

economy. It will be seen to have delivered growth, safeguarded and created jobs, driven investment and had a positive impact on the quality of life for Lincolnshire residents. Together, we will aim to double the real value of tourism to our economy by 2020"

Lincolnshire County Council's Current Marketing, Promotion and Communications activities

Two areas within LCC have expertise on Marketing and Communications: Economy and Culture and Strategic Communications. There is some overlap in skills across the two service areas, for example both have event management experience, but there are also differences. Economy and Culture's marketing is part of wider economic development, heritage or tourism activity; Strategic Communications media and communications expertise is broadly applied across the Council's activities, including supporting Economy and Culture, largely with a local audience and media. There are aspects of specialist marketing and communications, where the skill set and capacity does not exist in-house in either service area, for example, generating journalist visits and PR through specialist knowledge of a particular sector, eg food and agriculture.

Another point of differentiation is that, generally, Economy and Culture undertake all activities through external partnerships, whilst Strategic Communications largely has an LCC corporate perspective and remit at its core. The next sections describe each service area's activities in more detail.

Economy and Culture

Economy and Culture's marketing and promotion activities are an integral part of Economic Development. For example, to support the manufacturing sector, LCC took a lead in developing Teal Park to create a high profile, high quality business park site for the area, and secure investment from Siemens and other high value, high skill employers.

We also work with the financial sector and others to ensure local business support fits the sector's needs; we promote companies in the sector which in turn promotes that area's credibility as a manufacturing location. Events have been identified as a cost effective way of getting these messages across which also directly benefits local companies, eg exhibiting at the Advanced Engineering Show at NEC Birmingham.

Lincoln Castle Revealed is a major investment in the heritage and tourism offer for Lincoln, so the project creates a step change in the attraction of Lincoln as a place to live, work and visit. We work in partnership to develop the area's culture and heritage offer which creates excitement and gives confidence to investors that it is a place where "things are happening". The approach is that of place marketing, but so far has not addressed promotion of major housing growth.

Work across investment promotion, tourism and the food sector has been brought together into one brand – **Select Lincolnshire**, which celebrates and promotes the best Lincolnshire has to offer both businesses and consumers. Within budget

constraints, Select Lincolnshire is raising the profile of Lincolnshire whether it is promoting and attracting investment into the county, signposting local produce within the County or sending the best of Lincolnshire's food and drink across the UK.

Economy and Culture provides a substantial role on **Lincolnshire's tourism marketing**, including:

- LCC own the Destination Management System and associated website visitlincolnshire.com
- produce an annual countywide visitor guide (self-financing)
- deliver destination PR support

Visit Lincolnshire, the county's official tourism website, attracts over 40,000 unique visitors each month and has been overseen by Lincolnshire County Council since the beginning of 2011. The County and District Council have agreed to fund the website for the next three years to provide a sound footing from which to move forward commercially. Funding for that period is as follows: 12/13: £55k, 13/14: £46k, 14/15: £36k.

The strength of Select is that it both promotes the County externally and has built networks within the County. **Select Lincolnshire for Food** members (230 businesses from the hospitality, tourism and agri-food sectors) benefit from bespoke business support, marketing and event opportunities, regular PR and communications.

LCC's aim is to ensure financial stability for Select branded activity and so has put the services out to tender to secure a self-financing model, led by the private sector. As a result, LCC is providing 3 years' funding to the Chamber of Commerce: 2013 - £60,000; 2014 - £48,000; 2015 - £30,000 to facilitate the transition and develop the scheme further.

The marketing tool for Select Lincolnshire for Food is the Good Taste Magazine, which has two main roles: promoting the county and promoting and bringing business to members. The magazine was developed to address a shift in the way people accessed tourist information and advertising and the identified need to create a positive lifestyle image for the county. Independent evaluation has shown Members value the Magazine and for many it has had a direct positive impact upon their business. There is a plan in place for Good Taste to be cost neutral to LCC by 2016.

Select Lincolnshire for Business both promotes investment and development opportunities and provides a service to potential investors, supported through a network of UKTI, local authorities, agents, developers and advisors who provide sites and premises information to ease the relocation process. A confidential and free of charge service - The Lincolnshire Commercial Property Service – also provides additional information on demographics, financial assistance, labour supply, training programmes, the skills market and broadband.

A Memorandum of Understanding is in place between GLLEP and UKTI on engagement with potential foreign investors and managing relationships with overseas owned companies in the County. Economy and Culture co-ordinate this on behalf of GLLEP, with North and North East Lincolnshire.

The budget for investment promotion is around £80k, most of which is spent on events and exhibitions with their dual role of raising profile and directly supporting local businesses. £40k has been aligned with GLLEP to help draw down additional funding for GLLEP activities. The Events and Exhibitions include: Belton (investment promotion), Business Live at Lincolnshire Show ground (on behalf of GLLEP), GLLEP business summit, Advanced Engineering Show, MIPM (Property and investment) (on behalf of GLLEP), East Midlands Property Show, Linc up Live. These events are evaluated for quality, for example a comment from Belton included "it was an excellent event.....information gathering and networking... enabling us to consider buying local and partnership working".

Outcomes can be achieved over a long period, as with investment enquiries. For example, a hotel development in Lincoln from an Enquiry at MIPIM property show converted many months later.

Strategic Communications

The strategic communications team helps to promote the work of the council, protecting and improving the authority's reputation. It encourages an integrated approach to ensure communications are as effective and efficient as possible. Up until now, strategic communications have not been involved in many aspects of place marketing for Lincolnshire. However, the Service area's position at the centre of the organisation with the team of strategic communicators, digital engagement team, a designer and an events manager, put them in a good position to add value and help oversee any integrated communication campaign.

Planning

The team creates tailored communications plans to meet specific objectives, ensuring that the right messages, get to the right people in the right way.

This ranges from promoting one-off events, such as an exhibition at The Collection, to providing on-going support for long-term projects and campaigns, like the countywide roll out of superfast broadband. It also involves overseeing the work of any outside agencies brought in to support specific projects.

Media

One of the main elements of the team's work is to secure media space for council activities. A recent example is the widespread and on-going coverage achieved for the major improvements taking place at Lincoln Castle.

To do this, the team produces and distributes news releases to regional, national and trade-specific media. It also deals with press enquiries, providing statements from an appropriate spokesperson. This is particularly important when dealing with

contentious issues as it ensures that the council has the opportunity to explain its actions.

The team monitors council-related media coverage on a daily basis, allowing it to evaluate the effectiveness of its communications.

Digital engagement

The digital engagement team works to increase the web-presence of council activities, making relevant information easier to find.

It can help set up project-specific social media accounts where appropriate, providing advice on how best to manage these. Examples within Economy and Culture include the Twitter accounts for The Collection, onlincolnshire and Gainsborough Old Hall.

The team can also produce short videos to add an extra dimension to promotional activities.

Design

The council's designer produces a range of artwork to assist in promoting council activities. Among recent examples is the range of materials created for the onlincolnshire programme.

This is generally more cost-effective than employing an outside design agency. However, when there isn't the capacity to do a piece of work in-house, the designer can suggest improvements and provide advice on the correct use of council branding.

The designer also helps secure the best price for print work.

County News

One of the main audiences Economy and Culture often wishes to reach is county residents and businesses. Strategic communications helps this through its quarterly publication, County News. This is delivered to all 334,000 households in the county, and includes regular features on the work of Economy and Culture, as well as a two page events listing.

Events

The strategic communications team employs an officer who can advise on all aspects of event management. This includes recommending appropriate venues and securing the best price possible. The events officer is also responsible for overseeing the council's presence at the Lincolnshire Show, a key opportunity for Economy and Culture to promote its work.

Suggestions to Develop Place Marketing and make better use of resources

a) Working with GLLEP

The GLLEP paper sets out that the ambitions and scale of growth planned for parts of the area mean there is a need to make a step change in the priority given to place marketing and establish the activity as an important part of the Strategic Economic Plan.

The recommendation to GLLEP was that it should commission a group, co-ordinated by LCC, which involves experienced private and public sector marketing professionals to develop the place marketing approach which is collaborative and co-ordinated, to the degree necessary to achieve impact. The group's work should cover:

- Identify, and make accessible, all marketing activity being done to date and practical ways of sharing information to ease co-ordination
- Identifying win/wins for organisations and partnerships and activities to build upon in a larger scale approach
- Engage more fully with local stakeholders who have identified marketing as an important priority about what they would be prepared to commit in resources, and how this could be taken forward
- Work on short term opportunities and wins – notably 2015 high profile media and events programme to celebrate Lincoln Castle Revealed and the Magna Carta
- In parallel, set out vision and shape long term plans and set objectives and targets
- Develop champions scheme – and how it would be implemented
- Confirm and research target audiences
- Develop place, activity and organisation framework for delivery
- Scope image and branding and campaign approach – and how it should be implemented
- How to achieve a significant and long term injection of funding and deliver capacity into marketing and promotion

b) Greater co-ordination within LCC

Activity leads within Economy and Culture and Strategic Communications agree greater co-ordination of activities would add value. It has been put in place that the service areas should meet regularly to identify activities, allocate internal resource where this is possible, or to agree situations where an external resource may be required.

The immediate priority is to work together on ensuring maximum promotion of Lincoln Castle Revealed and the Magna Carta celebrations in 2015 as the focus for promotion of Lincoln and all it has to offer as an attractive place, to live, work, invest and visit. Aligned to that, the role of Lincolnshire County Council in facilitating this and other projects which improve places for the future should be communicated. Appendix A sets out the work in place so far and planned up to 2015, which will be developed further through joint working.

2. Conclusion

Resources for marketing have been reduced by LCC and other organisations, but significant activities are still being undertaken. To make the step change needed to promote the area, work being taken forward will be reported to GLLEP in January. Work on 2015 as a major opportunity to promote the area is also being planned in detail and will be the focus of increased joint working between Economy and Culture and Strategic Communications.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincoln Castle Revealed Marketing 2013-15

5. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
The role of Place Marketing in achieving our Growth Ambitions (GLLEP Board 18-09-13)	Economy & Culture, City Hall, Lincoln
Visitor Economy: Destination Management Plan (GLLEP Board 25-07-13)	Economy & Culture, City Hall, Lincoln

This report was written by Jenny Gammon, who can be contacted on 01522 550511 or jenny.gammon@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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