

Subject: Implementing the Tourism Marketing
Action Plan

Status: For Publication

Report to: The Cabinet

Date: 19th September 2006

Report of: Head of Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing

Portfolio

Holder: Cabinet Member for Regeneration .

Key Decision:

YES

Forward Plan

General Exception

Special Urgency

“X” In Relevant Box

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Members approval for the use of external consultants to support 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. 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.*
- *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 A report to Cabinet on 25th January 2006 recommended a different way of supporting tourism in the Borough, moving away from the traditional approach of delivering visitor information through a Tourism Information Centre. Instead it was recommended and agreed to work with Lancashire County Council on using the Borough's libraries for the provision of visitor-related information alongside the creation of a new post of Marketing and Business Development Manager to champion and co-ordinate tourism-related activity and to help local businesses to respond to the tourism agenda.
- 4.2 A considerable amount of work has already been undertaken to implement these recommendations including the closure of the Tourist Information Centre, the establishment of information points in local libraries and the creation of a dedicated Rossendale Tourism website. This report is specifically concerned with taking forward the final element of the recommendations of this previous report which was the creation of a 'tourism champion'.
- 4.3 An allocation of £36,000 was included within the Borough's Council 2006/07 budget to support the costs of the 'tourism champion' to help to deliver the Tourism Marketing Action Plan that was produced in November 2005. In particular the Action Plan identified a number of short-medium terms actions that could be undertaken within this financial year 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 as well as over-seeing the production of the 2007-08 Visitor Guide.
- 4.4 Subsequently two potential options have been considered for delivering this resource:
- The creation of a dedicated fixed-term post within the Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing Section.
 - The use of external consultants working to an agreed brief in order to deliver the actions set out above.

There are a number of advantages of utilising the latter of these approaches. In particular it is felt that a consultant will be able to provide better access to the visitor and tourism networks that exist at the region and sub-region. Concerns have also been raised about the potential to recruit to a fixed-term post and it is also important to recognize the breadth of skills and attributes that will be

required to effectively undertake this work which will include business support, capacity building, partnership development, marketing and project management. It would be difficult to find all these skills in one person. Finally this is a short term contract of approximately five months with the requirement to produce a forward strategy at the end of the contract. It is possible that implementing this forward strategy will require a different approach. By undertaking the first phase of implementation through a contract approach this gives some flexibility for how the more medium to longer term work is taken forward.

- 4.5 Should this approach be agreed then the Economic Regeneration Manager will work with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the tendering procedure ensuring that the Council's Standing Orders are met.
- 4.6 £36,380 is included within the 2006/07 budget to support this work. Because it is unlikely that this contract will begin before November 2006 it is proposed that the contract is advertised on a fixed fee of £24,000. This would leave £12,380 in the budget to support other tourism-related actions and activities which could include promotional material, equipping information points, events marketing, exhibitions, etc. These actions, alongside the consultancy work, will together provide a real opportunity to begin to re-position Rossendale in respect of its tourism and visitor offer.

5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

- 5.1 Financial implications are clearly identified within the report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

- 6.1 None

7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

- 7.1 HR implications are covered in the report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Promoting Rossendale is a key priority of the Borough Council and consequently £36,380 was included within this years budget to address the key short-medium term actions that came out of the Tourism Marketing Action Plan. The use of consultancy support to undertake the short term actions identified in this report is considered to be the best way of achieving the maximum outcome for this resource and of building the foundations of an on-going marketing and promotional programme that can put Rossendale firmly 'on the map'.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 9.1 The 2006-07 budget originally allocated to a Tourism and Marketing Officer post is used to support some short-term consultancy work alongside other actions linked to promoting the Borough and improving visitor information.
- 9.2 Delegated approval is given to the Head of Legal & Democratic Services and the Head of Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing , in consultation with the Lead Member for Regeneration, to appoint an appropriate consultant to undertake the work identified in this report.
- 9.3 Delegated approval is given to the Head of Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing to agree a package of promotional actions and activities to compliment the consultancy work, utilizing the full 2006-07 Tourism and Marketing budget.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Rossendale Regeneration Board and the LSP Tourism Working Group.

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| Background Papers | |
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| Document | Place of Inspection |
| Tourism Marketing Action Plan for Rossendale – November 2005 | Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing Service files |
| Report to Cabinet – Visitor Information Service in Rossendale, Head of Community and Partnerships, 25 th January 2006 | |