

Place Campaign for the District

Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee - 24 June 2021

Report of: Strategic Head of Property and Commercial

Status: For Consideration

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Cllrs. Peter Fleming & Lesly Dyball

Contact Officers: Strategic Head of Property Ext. 7099

Recommendation to Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee:

The report be noted.

Reason for recommendation: To update Members on the emerging Place Campaign being prepared for the District.

Introduction and Background

- 1 A strong place brand should be at the heart of any communication strategy that aims to support the well-being and economic development of the place that it serves.
- 2 Place branding should support the Council's key corporate objectives, firmly linked to economic development and the support it provides to local businesses. A successful place branding campaign should:
 - Promote the Sevenoaks district as a visitor destination
 - Attract new businesses and inward investment
 - Attract new people/families to live in the district
 - Support regeneration projects
 - Promote civic pride amongst existing residents
 - Encourage local people to spend more time and money in the district
- 3 Place branding, destination marketing, all those things that bring people and money into an area will be vital to our relationship with businesses. Also, and of equal importance, is economic growth.
- 4 As part of the Council's approved COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan, for the district to thrive financially, it will need to be attracting new business, jobs, and inward investment into the district, whilst competing with neighbouring authorities (including London) for the same business, the same jobs and the

same investment. Therefore, it is timely to consider undertaking a place campaign, setting the Sevenoaks District with a clear sense of identity and a strong, confident story to tell.

- 5 Place branding is important because it helps us to:
 - Create jobs and opportunities for our residents
 - Support the growth of our business base
 - Support local services through increased business rates
 - Support the visitor economy and a vibrant local cultural offer
 - Change the reputation of an area
 - Make our places better, which is at the heart of everything we do

- 6 A successful place brand should be authentic and realistic. It should reflect something of the essence and truth of the place it seeks to describe. It should not over-claim or make grandiose statements that will provoke a cynical response from residents, but should at the same time be optimistic and positive. It should be flexible to be used across a broad range of contexts, materials and circumstances. It should have buy-in from a range of stakeholders, both inside and outside the council.

- 7 Place brand and council brand are two very different things.
 - A council brand is that of our organisation and the services we provide. Council brand should encapsulate the values of our organisation and reflect leadership, accountability and ownership of those services. It is the visual expression of the relationship between the Council and its citizens.
 - A place brand is about the place or places that the Council serves. It is not about the Council, its partners, or individual businesses.

- 8 It is difficult for one brand to do both things. Keeping them separate is vital for a clarity of understanding about what you are doing, and what you are trying to achieve. A pure place branding project is far less likely to attract such negative attention, and also far more likely to attract co-funding from outside the Council.

- 9 A marketing consultant, Pillory Barn, was appointed in February 2021, to prepare a branding strategy, approach and place campaign. This commission would culminate with marketing platforms being defined and tailored campaigns being launched in July 2021.

- 10 A Steering Group (consisting of officers, members and external key stakeholders) was established to provide input into the emerging ideas and concepts. Significant headway has been achieved, and we are now in a position to provide an update on the proposed direction of travel and to obtain further feedback.

- 11 The intention with the Place Campaign, is to create a common brand that can be adapted and used by numerous organisations (public and private) within the District to promote the District as a place to live, work, invest and visit. It will also form the basis for the Council to advertise/promote the District.
- 12 The attached presentation, provides an overview of research trends and emerging thinking and sets out the approach for a new Place Campaign.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

None

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

There are no legal or risk implications related to this report.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users at this point, but further assessments will be undertaken as the strategy begins to take shape.

Conclusions

The report and presentation to be given to the Advisory Committee is to update the Committee on the emerging Place Campaign.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

Pillory Barn (2020): Insight Report. Sevenoaks District Council.

Detlev Munster

Strategic Head of Property & Commercial