

16 December 2014

Business & Town Centres Committee

Visitor Website

Report of: *Anne Knight, Economic Development Manager*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is to introduce a presentation by Partners by Design as one of a number of options to procure a visitor website for Brentwood Borough.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 **Members are asked to note and provide feedback on the presentation by Partners by Design.**
- 2.2 **Members are asked to note that Partners by Design is one of a number of options being considered for a visitor website and that commissioning the project will be subject to future resourcing for the on-going promotion and servicing of this website being resolved as part of the 2015/16 budget setting exercise.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Following the successful workshop in March 2014 with Visit Essex and local businesses and partners, it has become evident there is a clear need for a better coordinated marketing of the visitor offer of the Borough and that a visitor website would be a powerful tool to enable this.
- 3.2 A full report was considered at the previous Business & Town Centres Committee outlining the project and a range of options for developing the visitor website. Following this it was agreed to support the development of a website subject to future resourcing for the on-going promotion and servicing of this website being resolved as part of the 2015/16 budget setting exercise.
- 3.3 A number of proposals, including New Vision Group and Visit Essex, are being considered that could deliver a visitor website and to date there is no final decision on a preferred supplier. If approved, then a procurement tender exercise will be undertaken.

- 3.4 One of the potential suppliers is Partners by Design who are the only company to have developed a “mock up” of what the visitor website could potentially look like. Partners by Design presented this on the 11 September 2014 to the Committee’s Chairman, Acting Chief Executive, Officers and the Visit Essex Chief Executive.
- 3.5 It was agreed at the last Committee to invite Partners by Design to present to the members of the Business and Town Centres Committee, to provide an opportunity for members to get a flavour of how the website could look and its functionality.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 Different visitor website providers are being considered as well as best practice from other areas. A preferred option that meets the required brief and provides the best value for money has not yet been determined.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The one over-riding request from the visitor economy businesses in the borough following the successful workshop with Visit Essex in March 2014 was for one co-ordinated point of offer for the visitor which could be provided by a visitor website (especially important given the demise of the Tourist Information Centre).
- 5.2 A Visitor Website would provide an effective and up to date tool and platform from which the visitor offer of the borough can be promoted to the outside world to encourage increased visitors, dwell time, spend and investment in the borough.
- 5.3 Supporting the visitor economy is a key priority in the Economic Development Strategy.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 This project supports the delivery of the visitor economy of the Economic Development Strategy which has successfully undergone public consultation.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 Economic Development is a key priority to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities of sustainable economic development, promoting

a mixed economic base across the Borough, maximising opportunities for retail and a balance night time economy. This includes:

- Facilitating the creation of new businesses
- Assisting in the provision of advice and guidance for local businesses
- Working in partnership with the business community and support agencies
- Seeking inward investment into the Borough
- Assisting the SE LEP and Heart of Essex Partnership to secure projects and funding to benefit the Brentwood economy

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jo-Anne Ireland, Acting Chief Executive

Tel & Email: 01277 312712 / jo-anne.ireland@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.1 An indicative budget of £7,000 has been allocated from the 2014/15 Economic Development budget to commission an agreed preferred supplier, subject to securing future resourcing for the on-going promotion and servicing of this website being resolved as part of the 2015/16 budget setting exercise.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Christopher Potter, Monitoring Officer and Head of Support Services

Tel & Email: 01277 312860 / christopher.potter@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.2 None

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

- 8.3 None

9. Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

- 9.1 None

10. Appendices to this report

- 10.1 None

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Anne Knight - Economic Development Officer
Telephone: 01277 312607
E-mail: anne.knight@brentwood.gov.uk