

Workshop on Raising the Profile and Image of West Norfolk

The overall image and perception of the area can be critical in influencing location decisions. The development of a co-ordinated approach to ensure that there are positive and consistent messages about the area is essential if a positive image of West Norfolk is to be created. These messages are often seen as being directed at external audiences but they are equally important to local residents as these messages can instil a sense of pride in the area.

Marketing of a location can often be referred to in a general way without there being a clear understanding of why a particular activity or combination of activities should be undertaken, who the target audiences are, and what the outcomes will be. The decision to undertake a marketing exercise can often be unstructured and non strategic stemming from reasoning such as 'other locations are, so we should too'; 'we have always done it'; or 'we need to do something to raise our profile'. However if the 'product' is not right, the resources committed to promotional activities may well be wasted and negative perceptions developed or reinforced.

Evidence by the Audit Commission into location marketing suggests that carefully researched and targeted initiatives are likely to be more effective than general advertising and promotion. There are a number of elements that can be used as part of any initiative to raise the awareness and profile of Borough. These elements can include provision of information on the area, securing press coverage and the release of good news stories as well as advertising, exhibitions, direct mail and telemarketing. The target audiences and the associated messages will influence the mix of components used.

Points to be considered during the Workshop are:

- What are the key strengths and opportunities of the area as a location for investment?
- What are the key messages that need to be developed?
- What activities need to be undertaken to get the agreed messages out?
- Who are the audiences for these messages and does a suite of messages have to be developed for the different audiences?
- Which partners should be involved in developing the messages and then ensuring that they are delivered? What will be the roles for the different partners?

There are a number of potential issues or tensions that also need to be considered when developing any marketing strategy. These are:

- Is the focus to be on developing the profile of King's Lynn as a location for investment or should it be at the West Norfolk level?
- Are the messages and image to be created the same for the visitor/tourist market as for business market and if not how should the balance be determined?

- Should the focus be on the administrative area of the Borough or on the economic sub region, which is wider covering parts of Breckland, North Norfolk, South Lincolnshire and Fenland?
- How do we balance the messages of encouraging growth with the need to manage development pressures and the potential resistance from the local population?
- Promotional and marketing activity is being undertaken at a County level with Norwich featuring prominently. Should any marketing activity at the local level relate to the County/Norwich activity? Is Norwich a key element of any local promotion and are there other places?

In order to get the maximum from the workshop Partners are asked to give some thought to the points and issues identified above prior to the meeting.