

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

16 APRIL 2019

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

SOUTH WALES TOURISM MARKETING HUB

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval to accept a funding offer from the Regional Tourism Engagement Fund and enter into appropriate financial and legal agreements for the delivery of the South Wales Tourism Marketing Hub. This will work with public, private and third sector organisations involved in the visitor economy across the 10 Local Authority areas of the Cardiff Capital Region to develop and distribute digital content promoting a range of bookable products to UK and overseas markets including travel trade, business events and consumer campaigns.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1. This report supports the following corporate priorities:

- Supporting a successful economy – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
- Smarter use of resources – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background

3.1. Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has a strong track record in delivering partnership projects with Visit Wales and other Local Authorities. The current Cardiff Capital Region Travel Trade Campaign, previously the Southern Wales campaign, covering all the Authority areas of the Cardiff City Deal has been led by BCBC for many years. The Valleys Marketing campaign, covering the Authority areas of Bridgend, Caerphilly, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Merthyr Tydfil is now also led by BCBC.

3.2. The 10 Local Authority areas forming the Cardiff Capital Region have for a number of years worked together through a range of public, private and third sector partners to deliver a regional approach towards supporting the growth of the tourism industry through enhanced travel trade and business tourism activity.

- 3.3. The model of delivery that has historically existed has involved partners each contributing a level of match funding and that being used to access external grant resources to add value.
- 3.4. This approach has enabled partners to access markets and operators which, on their own, with the resources available to them individually, would not have been achievable for many. It has delivered an efficient use of resources and resulted in an increase in visitor numbers in all Counties where partner organisations have engaged.

4. Current Situation / Proposal

- 4.1. In 2017, the Local Authorities that make up the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal worked together to develop a set of regional Destination Management priorities.
- 4.2. In November 2018 Visit Wales launched its latest round of funding through the Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF), with a clear message that business as usual would not be supported and genuine collaboration was required.
- 4.3. During November 2018 a series of meetings and discussions took place with the 10 Local Authorities to draw together the elements of current activity into a new approach which delivered against agreed priorities and also Visit Wales aspirations and a proposal for funding was subsequently submitted to RTEF.
- 4.4. BCBC has been informed that the bid to RTEF to take forward this work has been approved.
- 4.5. The project will be led by BCBC as the applicant and directly delivered by BCBC and partners from across the Cardiff Capital Region.
- 4.6. The South Wales Tourism Marketing Hub will develop a streamlined, coordinated approach to collaborative digital marketing in the Cardiff Capital Region, including travel trade, business tourism and consumer campaigns.
- 4.7. The project demonstrates a collaborative approach with the 10 Counties within the Cardiff Capital Region to deliver an integrated approach towards each area's Destination Management Plans, regional priorities and the aspirations of national strategies and programmes that seek to increase visitor numbers to the area and the economic benefits that result.
- 4.8. The new Marketing Hub will capitalise on the successful relationships built in previous projects to develop a more private and voluntary sector led model which sell the region by bringing bookable products to the market through quality, innovative campaigns. Where applicable, previous work and assets such as the Meet Cardiff Capital Region will be utilised as well as existing destination or marketing area platforms.
- 4.9. The regional destination website, content creation, travel trade campaign and business tourism campaign will form the core, ongoing activity. The consumer campaigns will be more time bound with representation and footprint being determined on a campaign by campaign basis. Where applicable, campaigns could

have a footprint beyond, yet not cover in its entirety, the Cardiff Capital Region. Relevant product will be more important than Local Authority boundaries.

4.10. The Marketing Hub approach, where all activity is co-ordinated through a central point as opposed to a physical hub, will fill the regional level gap, acting as a focus for marketing and digital content supporting strategic tourism investments. It will capitalise on successful previous projects, applying the successes of Southern Wales to consumer and business tourism marketing.

4.11. This approach has the full support of a range of partners in Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan.

4.12. This new approach will:

- Optimise limited resources
- Better align campaign activities
- Reduce duplication
- Increase private sector buy-in
- Increase market orientation
- Make 'cross-border' working easy

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

5.1. Any necessary agreements will be put in place with support from the BCBC legal department.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1. It is considered that no negative impacts will be created.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment Template has been completed and a summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is below:

- Long-term: The activities that form part of the scheme have been identified by the partners that will take part and are closely aligned to Destination Management Plans in each of the areas. A regional collaborative approach, linked to regional working as part of the Cardiff Capital Region area works towards long-term delivery.
- Prevention: On their own none of the partners or participating Counties would be able to achieve the scale of impact that such a partnership approach offers. Therefore delivering in this way offers the opportunity to build on success to date and prevent a deterioration of the value that tourism brings to the region.

- Integration: The scheme will achieve this way of working by recognising the approaches that are proposed for support are those that have been identified by partner organisations due to their synergy with local, regional and national priorities.
- Collaboration: The proposals have been developed and will be delivered through a strong partnership between BCBC and those partners that will form part of the delivery.
- Involvement: The scheme will be delivered in close partnership with a range of local stakeholders in each area. Discussions and development with neighboring Counties has taken place through BCBC's Economy Team and relevant officers from neighbouring Councils as well as representatives from a range of private and third sector partners.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. The total cost of the scheme as submitted was £204,380. Of this, it was proposed that £150,000 would be in the form of a grant. The remaining value would be match funding, currently made up of £20,500 agreed match funding from Local Authorities in the region, including Bridgend, leaving £33,880 of further match funding to be underwritten in the first instance by BCBC.
- 8.2. At project acceptance and commencement the unsecured amount will be underwritten by BCBC's core tourism funding on the explicit understanding that the service will endeavor to secure additional funding during delivery. If this does not occur then discussions will take place with Visit Wales and partners about a reduced scope of the scheme to ensure that BCBC does not need to commit the underwritten amount in actual terms.
- 8.4 The current project plan identifies the project officer salary for year one only being covered by a combination of the RTEF grant and partner contributions. By April 2020 income streams will be established to cover the project officer salary. The additional income streams will come via buy in to various campaign activity across the work elements. If they do not materialise then the scale and scope of the scheme will be revised.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1. To accept the offer of funding from the Regional Tourism Engagement Fund and enter into appropriate legal and financial agreements, subject to any necessary approval from the Interim Section 151 Officer and Head of Legal and Regulatory Services for the delivery of the South Wales Tourism Marketing Hub.

Zak Shell
HEAD OF OPERATIONS – COMMUNITY SERVICES
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Background documents:
None