

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**21 NOVEMBER 2018**

### **CHRISTMAS RETAIL PROMOTION CAMPAIGN**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To provide the Economic Development Committee with information relating to the current Christmas Retail Promotion Campaign – ‘Newark Wonderland’.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 The need for a retail promotion campaign arose from concerns raised by local retailers and businesses that the disruptive roadworks in the town were discouraging customers and adversely affecting their trade throughout 2018. There has remained a concern among some businesses since the completion of the roadworks that customers have failed to return to the levels experienced prior to the disruption as they have now taken their custom elsewhere.

2.2 The Newark Management Group (NMG), which was recently established as a result of recommendations from the published Destination Management Plan for Newark, discussed the need for a retail promotion campaign at its meeting in September 2018. Members of the Group felt that a campaign should be executed in the run up to Christmas to support the local retail economy by maximising footfall during this critical trading period when there is a programme of seasonal events, activities and free car parking offers already planned for Newark.

2.3 Compensatory funding for the campaign was sought from Severn Trent Water (in addition to the direct compensation offered by Severn Trent Water to affected businesses) due to the disruption caused by the roadworks in Newark but this was ultimately not forthcoming. Given the irregular circumstances, Newark & Sherwood District Council has therefore stepped in as a one-off to fund the campaign from the anticipated additional income generated, over the budgeted amount, by the Car Parking Service during the current financial year.

2.4 The campaign objectives can be summarised as follows:

- i) To raise awareness of Newark as an appealing destination for shopping, eating and drinking among potential day visitors from a wide catchment area of approximately 20 miles radius, including Nottingham, Lincoln, Grantham and Sleaford.
- ii) To drive increased footfall from customers within this catchment area to boost retail and hospitality business in Newark specifically in the pre-Christmas trading period.
- iii) To demonstrate to local retailers and hospitality businesses that we are taking positive action to help increase footfall and consumer expenditure in Newark and thus generate more positive sentiment.

- iv) To provide us with much-needed seasonal and perennial content assets that can potentially be reused in future campaigns, thus representing future investment and adding value.

### **3.0 Proposals**

3.1 Given the objectives above of raising awareness and driving footfall from across a wide catchment area, we have worked with an external specialist PR agency to develop a campaign with a combination of traditional and digital media, including regional press, lifestyle publications and social media channels, to deliver the required reach.

3.2 The annual dressing of windows for Christmas provides an ideal creative opportunity to make the campaign engaging and interactive for consumers. Hooking into an established, growing and highly visual initiative by the town's retail and hospitality businesses offers greater potential for engagement and response than developing a new activity. Therefore, the 'Newark Wonderland' campaign is engaging local businesses in a challenge to create festive window displays that the public will vote for. The interactive campaign will comprise creation and dissemination of engaging content, including video, across owned (Council-related) and earned (media) channels. Specifically, the campaign will include the following business-facing and consumer-facing activities:

- Business engagement – forums, video, online
- Public launch featuring local businesses
- Video of businesses' Xmas window displays
- Videos of public's reactions
- Public poll
- Video of winner's award

3.3 We are working closely with Totally Locally, representing the town's retail and hospitality businesses, to ensure that messages are aligned and that campaign activity is complementary. The 'Newark Wonderland' campaign will also hook into the programme of seasonal events and activities already planned for Newark thus helping to boost participation in them and, in turn, strengthen the campaign's proposition messaging.

3.4 The campaign timeline includes the following milestones:

- 1<sup>st</sup> November: 'Warm-up' social media activity starts
- 12<sup>th</sup> November: Campaign launch
- 15<sup>th</sup> November: Totally Locally Newark retailer forum
- 21<sup>st</sup> November: Lincolnshire Life editorial and advertising
- 1<sup>st</sup> December: Public voting opens
- 21<sup>st</sup> December: Announce winning business
- 11<sup>th</sup> January: Campaign evaluation

3.5 We considered a range of costed options for the campaign with the external PR agency and believe that the above activities will represent an optimum return on investment for an appropriate budget of £10,000.

### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 The campaign will follow the Council's guidelines for accessible communications.

## **5.0 Financial Implications (FIN18-19/3839)**

5.1 The proposed £10,000 budget outlined at paragraph 3.5 can be funded by a contribution from the anticipated additional income generated, over the budgeted amount, by the Car Parking Service during the current financial year.

## **6.0 Comments of Director**

6.1 The promotion campaign set out in this report is a way of providing some compensatory support for local businesses in Newark who suffered from reduced trade due to the roadworks undertaken this year by Severn Trent Water Authority (STWA).

6.2 The promotion seeks to increase footfall in the Town Centre and thereby provide the potential for increased trading for local businesses.

6.2 To fund this additional work a one-off budget has been allocated from in-year surplus on car parking fee income.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

**(a) the Economic Development Committee notes the delivery of the campaign and its objectives; and**

**(b) the Economic Development Committee supports the funding of the Campaign as set out in Section 5 of this report.**

## **Reason for Recommendations**

**The promotional nature of the campaign means that comment and feedback on it from local retail and hospitality businesses, customers and residents will be publicly evident. A campaign evaluation document will be produced in January 2019.**

## **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information, please contact Richard Huthwaite, Tourism (Place) Marketing Manager on Ext 5951.

**Matthew Finch  
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