

Marketing of Area East

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Purpose of the Report

To update Members about ongoing work to market Area East

Public Interest

To promote and market the Area as a destination for visitors and businesses

Recommendation:

- 1) To note and comment on the report
- 2) To approach major visitor attractions in Area East and explore the potential for collaborative marketing of the Area

Background

Several key strands of works have been developed over the last two/three years with implementation or progression of these happening during 2014, these included:

‘Relocate’ Brochure – This full colour brochure was published last August. It was aimed at promoting the lifestyle and business development opportunities within the area to businesses interested in relocating. Contributors included successful local businesses. Circulation, mainly as a PDF included Chamber networks (including the locally based groups), Town Councils, national specialist press such as Regeneration & Renewal magazine, local + national press, Trade & Industry Federation. It was also available on the Business Property Network website.

Business Property Network website – The aim of this initiative was to improve the marketing of available business property within Area East to interested businesses and inward investors. The emphasis was SSDC providing the content for the ‘lifestyle’ and business advocacy parts of the website and signposting to land/premises availability but with partnership agreement with Business Property Network for website development and to:

- Generate awareness of available business land and premises
- Attract enquiries from investors and businesses wishing to re-locate to, or within Area East
- Measures for the success of this work would be:
- Website hits to the BPN site together with contacts for follow-up
- Land/business premises in area available during period
- Click through numbers to linked sites

The lead in time to build confidence and attract business/premises owners was longer than anticipated with many preferring to retain light touch marketing or preserve arrangements with traditional estate agents.

The original allocation of £2,750 by Area East funded the set-up and one year of operation which came to an end last Autumn and has not been renewed

Market Town App'

All the towns in Area East are involved in the App' which has been promoted as Districtwide initiative through the Market Town Investment Group and actively supported by an Intern (who has now come to the end of her time with the District Council)

The free phone app includes

Homepage – A homepage with easier access to the nine participating towns .

Galleries – For displaying views of the town and local events.

Custom Carousel images – to allow it be tailored to each town, making it more personalised and visually appealing.

App Search – a search on each individual town, rather than linking through South Somerset ' – this makes it a lot easier for visitors to find.

Town Trails – the facility to include town walks.

The App was set-up so that there was local ownership of the initiative, this is generally through the Town Councils but in some cases the Business Associations are updating information.

As a result of the extensive promotion of the App by the District Council's Intern there was significant increase in use between April and December 2014

	April 2014	December 2014	% Increase	May 2015
Downloads	393	1516	+286%	
Active Users	47	148	+216%	
Business listings	679	882	+30%	

The trends demonstrate the significant benefits of having the Intern promoting the App with support from the individual market town representative.

At present there are significant numbers of visitors to nearby local attractions eg Hauser & Worth Gallery, Haynes Motor Museum, Race Course but little is done to draw people from these places into the market towns. It is suggested that direct dialogue is established with all these attractions to see what potential there is to capitalise on their established footfall.

Financial implications

There are no new financial implications resulting from this report

Implications for Corporate Priorities

A well supported business community

Measured by: An increase in satisfaction by businesses with the specialist support they receive in South Somerset

A vibrant and sustainable Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Economy

Measured by: Increasing local sustainability measured by the average level of self containment for South Somerset Wards

Other Implications

Included within the Area Development Plan

Background Papers: none