

AGENDA ITEM 4

Report title: Update on Visit Essex and Marketing Essex		PSEG/02/20
Report to: Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee		
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County Divisions affected: All Essex		

1. Purpose of Report

This report and presentation aim to provide information to Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the recent place marketing activities undertaken by Visit Essex through their autumn 2019 Campaign which forms the basis of Visit Essex' new direction of travel to be a strategic place-marketing body promoting Essex as a great place to live, work, visit, study and invest.

2. Background

Visit Essex has traditionally focused on the tourism industry which contributes £3.4 billion annually to the Essex economy. Since 2010 Visit Essex has operated a membership model, however this model is now saturated and the organisation needs to look at new ways to become financially self-sustaining and to add value to the work of the Council's economic growth team.

Essex is a great county of amazing contrasts but due to certain perceptions there is a lack of awareness of all that the county has to offer. A recent study of families and millennials showed that these currently held perceptions of Essex are often a barrier for visitors, investors, students and potential residents. To start addressing this and to build the case for a new strategic direction, the Council invested in a promotional campaign which aimed:

- To raise awareness of Essex as a place, highlighting its contrasting landscapes and diverse communities, particularly amongst opinion formers and influencers;
- To challenge some negative perceptions currently held by those outside the county;
- To bring together flagship businesses and organisations that haven't previously worked together to talk about Essex positively, with a united voice;
- To provide a foundation for further place promotion in the future especially in 2020 when Essex will celebrate high-profile anniversaries and host a number of large events and festivals including, the Mayflower 400th anniversary, the Beagle, Marconi 100, the Science and Creativity festival, Thames Estuary festival etc.

The autumn Campaign resulted in:

- **60 ambassadors** recruited to challenge the Essex stereotype: authors Martina Cole and Gillian Darley, sports people including Anne Wafula Strike and Nabila Tejpar, as well as Michelin star chefs the Galvin Brothers, and artist Elsa James;
- **5000 Calendars** featuring 15 Essex ambassadors distributed to influencers including media, MPs, government agencies, local authorities etc.;
- **A Kings Cross station** promotion where calendars and local wine were handed out and research was undertaken. 59% of respondents stated that had changed their opinion of Essex as a result of the pop-up stand, 88% felt positively about Essex. Approximately 1,000 people engaged;
- **PR and media coverage** to the value of **£29,000**, including Telegraph online, Property Week, Women and Home magazine etc. plus BBC Essex radio interviews x3, and BBC Look East TV items x2;
- **A Film** to be launched in 2020 with a selection of ambassadors;
- **Social Media Reach** to 4,431,226 people, plus 600,000 people who tuned in to the Look East TV coverage;

These positive outcomes have laid the foundations for the next phase of our work which is to understand how Visit Essex can better support the Council's economic development agenda by transitioning to a place-marketing agency.

3. Place Marketing

Place-marketing will support the Council to:

- Create a great place to grow up, live, work, invest, study and visit;
- Enable inclusive economic growth and target economic development to areas of opportunity.
- Support the delivery of new and improved physical, economic, and social assets across Essex through private and public investment.
- Raise awareness of and promote Essex's key assets with a clear message as to why people should come to Essex.
- Develop a narrative which helps to re-position Essex and set out of Vision for the future of Essex as a place.

Repositioning of Visit Essex, to be more strategic and focus on wider place-marketing will benefit other businesses aside from tourism attractions and accommodation providers, allowing Visit Essex or Marketing Essex (working title) and ECC to seek investment from wider stakeholders e.g. transport providers, universities and large businesses across the county who see the benefit in being part of this well-connected and vibrant county.

4. Appendices

Appendix A – PSEG presentation 20/02/20