
Report to: Southport Area Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 March 2013

Subject: Southport Christmas Promotion

Report of: Head of Economic Development and Tourism

Wards Affected: Ainsdale, Cambridge, Meols, Dukes, Norwood, Kew, Birkdale

Is this a Key Decision? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? No

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

To respond to the following question asked at Southport Area Committee of 23/01/2013: "the Head of Tourism be requested to submit a report on the costs associated with improving the promotion of Southport in the run up to and during the Christmas period"

Recommendation

That the following response is considered by Southport Area Committee

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		X	
2	Jobs and Prosperity	X		
3	Environmental Sustainability		X	
4	Health and Well-Being		X	
5	Children and Young People		X	
6	Creating Safe Communities		X	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		X	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	X		

Reasons for the Recommendation:

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs – N/A

(B) Capital Costs – N/A

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal None
Human Resources None
Equality 1. No Equality Implication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains <input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

Consultation has been undertaken with Southport retailers between September 2012 and December 2012

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT has been consulted and has no comments on this report. (FD 2197/13)

The Head of Corporate Legal Services has been consulted and has no comments on this report. (LD 1513/13)

Are there any other options available for consideration?

N/A

Implementation Date for the Decision

N/A

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Background Papers:

N/A

Background

Sefton's tourism department has worked with Southport retailers for over ten years to create marketing campaigns designed to support the crucial Christmas trading period. The partnership was initially between Southport Business Enterprise (SBE), Sefton's tourism marketing team and the Southport Tourism Business Network (STBN), with the SBE and STBN providing the private sector lead.

Recent changes to town centre management have resulted in there being no full time town centre management team based in Southport. To help fill the void Lord St Properties Director, Nicola Lynch, set up the 'Talking Shop' retail group, supported by Margaret Tarpey of Southport based Concept PR. This group has replaced the SBE on the Christmas working group.

2012 Working group

The 2012 Christmas campaign was managed by a working group made up of Talking Shop & STBN members supported by Sefton's tourism marketing team.

The group was chaired by Margaret Tarpey and consisted of:

Media – Andrew Edwards (Trinity Mirror), Sue Dare (Champion Media Group)
Sefton Tourism / Neighborhoods – Steve Christian (marketing), Sarah Carter (events), Chris White (Bootle / Southport Area Coordinator)
Talking Shop – Giles Gottig (D'vine / Mustard), Steve Booth (Southport Indoor Market), Bobbie Mathews (Artees), Sue Long (The Kitchen Sink), Yvonne Burns (Wayfarers Arcade)
Emma Baldwin (Ambassador Theatre Group) also attended the meetings on behalf of Southport Theatre & Convention Centre.

Budget

A core budget of £12,000 was allocated by the STBN for the Christmas marketing campaign (STBN budget comprises roughly equal contributions from the private sector (STBN members), Sefton's tourism marketing budget and Partners for Growth (European grant funding)).

This core budget was to be supplemented by private sector support including a series of free ads provided by both local newspaper groups and 'product' from Southport retailers. The product offered by retailers would be used to support a PR campaign, with competitions in regional media. The value of retail contributions was something over £2,000.

Marketing Activity

The group agreed an outline marketing plan based around the 'Discover the Art of Christmas in Southport' theme. Promotional materials included information on December events as well as the retail offer in order to attract visitors from across the northwest.

Events that were incorporated into the campaign included Chapel St Christmas Markets, Lord St International Market, Southport Indoor Market events including grotto, Wayfarers Arcade grotto and Southport Theatre's pantomime.

The marketing campaign consisted of:

- PR – a series of competitions were placed in regional newspapers using the product provided by retailers to provide the competition value required. Fourteen newspapers ran competitions including; Bolton News, Chorley Guardian, Liverpool Echo, Wirral Globe, St Helen's Star and Runcorn & Widnes World. Additionally editorial was secured in Lancashire Life, Lancashire Magazine and Gr8 Life magazine. The PR value of the space secured was over £100,000
- Fold-out leaflet. This included some advertising (generating £2,170 revenue which was ploughed back into the campaign). There were 115,000 of these printed and 112,000 were distributed with regional newspapers.
- Flyer. This was a DL flyer (15,000 print run) which supporting retailers put into bags from November, designed to encourage a further Christmas shopping visit.
- Radio Advertising. A 30 second and 10 second ad were run on Smooth Radio. The budget secured 84 X 30 second spots. Additionally the 10 second ad was played 172 times at no additional cost.
- Press Advertising. Trinity Mirror and Champion Newspapers offered a series of free ads which appeared in their Sefton & West Lancs titles. An ad was paid for in Lancashire Magazine
- Poster Sites. Merseyrail provided just under 100 poster sites free of charge during December. The group only had to cover the cost of printing the posters.

The group met in January to feed back on the campaign. The consensus was that, considering the limited budget and resources that it had been very successful and had generated circa £150,000 of activity for a 'cash budget' of £12,000.

2013 Campaign

The retail working group will commence planning for the Christmas 2013 campaign in late summer. It is anticipated the group will consist of broadly the same members as 2012 possibly with the addition of some new retailers.

The activity budget is likely to remain in the region of £12,000. Tourism, STBN and PFG (residual funding) budgets have been confirmed for 2013-14 and there is currently no additional source of funding that the group is aware of. Efforts will however be made to increase the retailer product contributions to enable more activity to be undertaken.

If the proposal for a Business Improvement District (BID) company is successful this will potentially be a source of additional support for the retail sector. However this is not scheduled to be operational until April 2014 and would therefore not be in a position to support the Christmas trading period until 2014.