

Destination Branding for the Lancaster District

Invitation to Tender

Summary

Economic Growth is a corporate priority for both Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council (jointly referred to as “the Council”). To achieve this, a key element is supporting the development of the district’s visitor economy, facilitating economic gains from both: a) inward investment and regeneration; and b) leisure visitors and tourism.

Research has shown that the reputation and image of the district¹ and its principle destinations does not reflect the true quality of the offer available, and that the many attributes and assets for presenting the district as a destination for both leisure and commerce are currently undersold.

Furthermore a number of major regeneration initiatives (such as the redevelopment of Lancaster Castle) are being planned which presents the prospect of transforming the district’s profile. This presents an exciting new opportunity for developing a re-energised and competitive destination position and place brand, enabling the district to achieve and exceed fair market share for both visitors and inward investment. This will add strength to Lancashire’s own wider identity as a destination of choice, as well as strengthening the district’s own destination profile and realising the associated economic benefits to this.

The Council is therefore seeking to develop a new destination brand and strategy to market the district and its principle destinations, as an appealing place in which to visit, invest, work and live. It is therefore inviting experienced consultants to research, define and align a clear destination branding and implementation plan, which will:

- 1) Review and analyse the nature of the district as a visitor destination product, in the context of both its existing, and potential future offer from emerging regeneration projects.
- 2) Analyse existing research where this exists, and carry out additional research as is necessary and agreed, including both consumer research and stakeholder engagement, to support the place marketing and brand development process.
- 3) Present a proposed, stakeholder endorsed, destination branding strategy with an associated creative concept and suggested implementation plan.
- 4) Carry out any other work as is agreed necessary as part of the place marketing and brand development process.

¹ It is recognised that in certain circumstances, the key destination offer from a visitor and investor’s perspective may include the Lancaster District administrative boundaries and its peripheral boundary areas.

Background and Objectives

Key Assets

The Lancaster district has a population of approximately 140,000 people, with some remarkable assets. Lancaster celebrates fine architecture, built and historical heritage with many stories to tell as the former County hanging town. It also has two successful and well-respected universities and a strong contemporary arts and culture offer. Morecambe celebrates emerging strengths in natural tourism and as a hub-town for Morecambe Bay, a natural environment, including the Arnside and Silverdale AONB, with numerous international designations. And the district's outstanding rural landscape and hinterland, including the Forest of Bowland AONB, has been a source of inspiration for many over the years, including the likes of Wainwright, Wordsworth, Turner and Grey, and is a remarkable, and yet much understated recreational asset.

Although somewhat removed from the major metropolitan and urban centres of the region, the district is just an hour's drive to both Manchester and Liverpool and their respective airports. It has direct transport links from the M6 and west coast mainline, and is located on the northern edge of the Central Lancashire City Region. The forthcoming development of the M6 link road to Heysham will also provide direct transportation links from the M6 to Heysham Port, with Lancaster set to benefit as the district's gateway city further to new inward investment opportunities arising from this.

It is genuinely believed that the district exudes (or has the potential to exude) quality destination assets, particularly within the realms of cultural heritage and the natural environment. In doing so, it presents key opportunity to realise economic growth for Lancashire as a major sub-regional centre, as well as for the Lancaster district; both as the district's main retail and cultural centre, and as a gateway city to Cumbria and the Lake District; Yorkshire and the Yorkshire Dales; and Morecambe Bay.

Weaknesses

The district is currently presented collectively as "city coast countryside."² Through this it is believed there are missed opportunities to better communicate the distinct offer and strength of individual personality for each of the district's destinations, and capitalising on the economic benefits from realising these. This is particularly significant for Lancaster as a major Lancashire sub-regional centre, and the district's main retail and cultural centre.

There is also a view that the district's marketing may be too inward looking by making administrative distinctions for the district which are not recognised externally by those visiting the district and peripheral destinations based on their natural geography. Equally, the district currently rather fails to set itself in the wider context of Morecambe Bay or alongside the neighbouring Lake District and Yorkshire Dales, to realise the opportunities presented from putting forward a differentiated coastal natural tourism offer alongside those international brands.

Profile and Opportunity

In some respects, it is felt that the district has a good destination profile, if somewhat a hidden gem. It is known for its built and historical heritage, contemporary culture and outstanding natural environment; as well as for its recreational opportunities and good quality of life.

² 'Promoting City Coast and Countryside' is also featured as part of Lancaster City Council's corporate logo as the local authority service provider. The work set out for tender is within the context of the district as a visitor and investor destination, and not in regard to the corporate identity of Lancaster City Council.

Lancaster in particular has seen promising and visible economic growth in recent years, with the city's two universities enjoying considerable increases in student numbers, a strong reputation for excellence in research and teaching, as well as having made considered investments in their facilities and accommodation in recent years.

The need to raise the district's profile is however becoming more pressing as significant proposals and emerging regeneration projects are progressed. These include the re-development of Lancaster Castle and Canal Corridor North schemes in Lancaster, and the Area Action Plan and Mary Portas Towns Bid in Morecambe.

A number of regeneration projects are also underway to promote and develop Morecambe Bay as a natural tourism visitor destination, including the successful Morecambe Bay Headlands to Headspace Heritage Landscape Partnership Scheme, Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership Scheme, and Morecambe Bay Nature Improvement Area funding bids. Lancaster also has an important role to play as part of this as a gateway city to the emerging Bay, including the Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB, as a natural tourism visitor destination; with numerous international and national designations for the quality of the natural environment present.

Within this context, Morecambe also has an increasing natural tourism offer, with an outstanding natural landscape and environment, and strengths in coastal recreational leisure activities; including as host to the start of the coast to coast Way of the Roses Morecambe to Bridlington Cycleway. The town also has a rich built and historical heritage as a seaside resort famed for its variety entertainment, stemming from its roots as a fishing village and direct relationship with the Bay from which the town took its name. Situated on the edge, but equally differentiated from the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks, Lancaster can significantly benefit as a gateway city and sub-regional centre from Morecambe and the Bay as emerging natural tourism visitor destinations.

In the rural areas, the Forest of Bowland AONB and famed "Crook O'Lune" are of national acclaim, and are increasingly popular with visitors, and sustainable industry operators alike. The Millennium Park Cycleway is particularly noteworthy, presenting accessible recreation from Lancaster and the wider district to the heart of the rural areas. Such a facility is both remarkable and understated, and is a further key asset for Lancaster as a gateway city, as well as the wider district.

Going Forward

In the light of the opportunities presented, it is thought that the district has new potential to become a national asset, with Lancaster, the district's retail and cultural centre, fulfilling its economic potential as both a gateway to the district, and as a distinctive and differentiated sub-regional centre in the heart of Northern Lancashire to visit, invest, work and live.

Invitation to Tender

Specialists in the field of place marketing and branding are invited to tender for this piece of work. Value for money will be a key determining factor. If the proposal suggests that further research should be carried out during the course of the project, the cost for this should be separately itemised.

Tenderers will be required to attend an inception on **Wednesday 19th December at 2pm.**

References to “the Council” relates to Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council as joint commissioners.

Submissions should provide:-

In addition to a proposal as to the manner, scope and expected output of the final report, all tenderers should provide the following:-

- Confirmation that the tenderer has the capacity to be able to commence the work immediately after appointment and complete within the timescales agreed at the inception meeting.
- Background details of the tenderer and examples of similar relevant work done for previous clients.
- CVs of the key personnel to be engaged on this project.
- A breakdown of the fee structure and the time commitment of each individual to the project.

Information for tenders

All enquiries for the purpose of preparing your tender should be made to:-

Gill Haigh
Assistant Head of Community Engagement
Lancaster City Council
Town Hall
Dalton Square
Lancaster
LA1 1 PJ

Telephone: 01524 582178
Mobile: 07766 928132
Email: ghaigh@lancaster.gov.uk

VAT

All prices quoted in the tender must be exclusive of VAT.

Expenses

The Council will not be responsible for any expenses that may be incurred by the Tenderer in the preparation of the Tender.

Expenses to be incurred in undertaking the project should be identified and included in the total project cost.

Acceptance or rejection of the Tender

The Council do not bind themselves to accept the lowest Tender and reserves the right to accept the whole or any part of any Tender at its discretion. Submissions will be evaluated in terms of quality, knowledge of the sector and an understanding of its likely future development, comprehensive nature of the expected output, ability to deliver on time, quality of key personnel and price.

Tender submissions

Tender submissions should be sent to:

Gill Haigh
Assistant Head of Community Engagement
Lancaster City Council
Town Hall
Dalton Square
Lancaster
LA1 1 PJ

Telephone: 01524 582178
Mobile: 07766 928132
Email: ghaigh@lancaster.gov.uk

Please send four copies of your tender.

Please also send an electronic copy to: ghaigh@lancaster.gov.uk.

Closing date

The closing date for the receipt of tender submissions is **10am on Wednesday 12th December**. Tenders received after this deadline will not be considered. The timescale for the work, key stages for reporting and payment and programme of the work are to be agreed at the inception meeting to take place at **2pm on Wednesday 19th December**.

Submission of invoices

Invoices shall only be submitted when the work is completed (unless staged payments are agreed). Invoices should be submitted to the Assistant Head of Community Engagement at the address previously shown. All invoices shall bear a purchase order number.

VAT on invoices

To the extent that Value Added Tax is properly chargeable and is supported by a valid VAT invoice, the Council will pay such tax as an addition to payments otherwise due to the contractor.

Background Information

A number of regeneration projects are being developed in the district as listed below:

Business Improvement Districts
Lancaster Cultural Heritage Strategy
Lancaster Science Park

Lancaster Square Routes
Luneside East Regeneration Project
Morecambe Area Action Plan in Morecambe
Morecambe Townscape Heritage Initiative 2 – A View For Eric
Morecambe’s West End
The Storey Creative Industries Project

www.lancaster.gov.uk/regeneration

Additional partnership led projects of interest include:

Morecambe Bay Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme (Headlands to
Headspace)
Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership
Morecambe Bay Nature Improvement Area

www.morecambabay.org.uk

Additional useful information includes:

Plans for Lancaster Castle – www.duchyoflancaster.co.uk
Economic Value of Arts Activity in the district Lancaster – www.lancasterartspartners.org