

# Identity, reputation and profile.

A brief for development of a vision, narrative and place promotion framework for Southampton.

## Introduction

Southampton is medium-sized city in Southern England that is a regional centre for employment, retail, education and leisure. It has a population of circa 254,000, over 1 million within a 45-mile catchment area, and welcomes 4 million visitors each year. The city has a plethora of assets the main ones being:

- a long history as a trading port with the most productive container port in the UK
- the UK's largest cruise operation and Europe's leading turnaround cruise terminal
- two high performing universities with complementary teaching and research strengths
- a premiere league football club
- an attractive public realm
- new centres for cultural activity and a growing creative scene
- connections with significant events and people from English history
- a multicultural community that promotes tolerance and inclusivity
- proximity to attractive locations such as the New Forest and South Downs National Parks
- good road and rail connections to the capital, London
- an international airport connecting Southampton with European and UK destinations.

The physical development of the City Centre has seen a renaissance since the introduction of the partnership-led City Centre Masterplan in 2012, particularly in culture, retail and hospitality. The masterplan sets out a vision for £3 billion of development centred around Quarters and 'Very Important Projects' (VIPs). Already, £2.9 billion has been invested.

Stakeholders in the city share an ambition to make the most of these assets and developments for the economic and social well-being of its communities by attracting more investment, higher visitor numbers, high-achieving students and skilled workers and businesses and entrepreneurs that have the talent and creativity to support economic growth.

There is a recognition that raising the city's profile, improving its reputation and sharpening its identity are central to this ambition. Stakeholders want the city to be known, locally, nationally and internationally, as a great place to live, visit, study, work and invest and do business in. They believe that wider recognition of the city's assets, past and present will contribute to profile raising and importantly that better differentiation, achieved by establishing a USP or similar, alongside a more collaborative approach to promotion and communication will help attract the money and people necessary to Southampton's success.

A set of milestones has been identified as opportunities to showcase the city. These are:

- Mayoral 800 anniversary
- Mayflower 400 in 2020
- A potential bid in 2021 to become UK City of Culture in 2025.

To make the most of these opportunities the city needs to take a fresh approach to place promotion. It needs to establish a coherent and compelling city vision and a city narrative that everyone can sign up to, as well as a set of practical plans for promotional activity and development of key sectors including tourism, culture and creative industries, retail, hospitality, education and marine/maritime. Momentum has been building to take action for some time and has brought together a partnership of organisations including Solent University, The University of Southampton, Southampton City Council, Go! Southampton (Southampton Business Improvement District), Southampton Cultural Development Trust and Associated British Ports.

This partnership is co-funding a project that will put the city on a trajectory that will deliver benefits over the short, medium and long term in terms of increased awareness, enhanced profile, improved reputation, attraction of talent, secured investment and growth of key sectors.

## Background

This is not the first time that stakeholders in Southampton have considered how to take a city-wide approach to promotion. In 2008 Southampton City Council produced a place marketing tool kit. It went some way towards describing the city's brand values and provided a range of tools for use in marketing communications including a font, a colour palette, imagery, as well as a comprehensive set of instructions for a wide range of applications. It gained some traction when it was first produced and can be seen in use around the city, but implementation and adoption is patchy. This can be seen at [http://www.city-id.com/assets/publications/southampton\\_legible\\_city\\_id\\_direct-guide-show.pdf](http://www.city-id.com/assets/publications/southampton_legible_city_id_direct-guide-show.pdf)

In 2016 the Southampton Cultural Development Trust commissioned a messaging toolkit to support communication of the city's cultural strategy.

In 2017 more work was undertaken to hone in on the city's assets, qualities and attributes. It involved 1-2-1 conversations with some of the main organisations including members of the city partnership. It produced a high-level report that outlines potential USPs and themes. We do not envisage that this project will repeat the work.

Taken together these three pieces of work provide a useful context and starting point for this project and potentially provide short cuts to achieving the project outputs.

## The project

### **Structure of the project**

The project has four distinct parts:

- Part 1: Vision and narrative and place promotion framework
- Part 2: Creative/branding tool kit
- Part 3: Destination management plan
- Part 4: Delivery and implementation arrangements.

The project will be overseen by a task and finish group comprising representatives of the main partner organisations: Solent University, The University of Southampton, Southampton City Council, Go! Southampton (Southampton Business Improvement District), Southampton Cultural Development Trust and Associated British Ports.

### **Project objectives**

1. Increase the profile of Southampton nationally and internationally among a range of external audiences that are important to the city's future;
2. Improve the reputation of Southampton so that it can attract the investment and people that are important to the city's future including securing funding from the Regional Growth Fund for example;
3. Establish a framework to help stakeholders in the city speak more coherently, with one voice, about its ambitions, assets and successes;
4. Establish a framework that can help the city maximise opportunities such as UK City of Culture;
5. Strengthen emerging partnerships and support partnership working to help the city maximise opportunities such as Mayoral 800 anniversary, Mayflower 2020 and UK City of Culture;
6. Grow pride in the city within its communities by developing a clearer shared sense of place and identify.

## **Project outputs**

- a) A clearly articulated long term vision for the city that is supported by the main organisations in the city and resonates with its communities;
- b) A city narrative that embraces the city's strongest themes, assets and USPs and can be woven into stakeholder's communications;
- c) A place promotion framework that shows how the city vision and narrative can be adopted and used by businesses, education providers, civic authorities, cultural organisations and tourism businesses to attract and enthuse key audiences;
- d) The creative tools to help stakeholders visually adopt and integrate place promotion into their own marketing and, for example a brand tool kit that;
- e) A destination management plan that identifies the main actions needed to grow the city's visitor economy including responsibilities, measures and timescales;
- f) Recommendations for how to manage place promotion and implement the destination management plan.

## The brief: part 1, vision, narrative and framework

This brief is being issued to secure the services of a consultancy or freelance specialist to undertake Part 1 of this project and deliver project outputs a, b and c.

### **Tasks**

1. Undertake research, mainly desk research, to take a long list of assets and themes to a short list of those with the greatest potential to define and differentiate Southampton. This should include a review of the 2008 branding tool kit, take account of the 2016 messaging tool kit for culture as well as existing strategic and practical plans for development and promotion of the city.
2. Test the shortlist of themes with internal and external audiences through focus groups and other methods as appropriate with the aim of identifying those that have potential to achieve the aims of the project.
3. Write a city vision and a city narrative that articulates Southampton's ambition, USPs, key assets ensuring that it is supported by key stakeholders and that is resonates with local communities.
4. Produce a place promotion framework that shows how the vision and narrative can be used by a range of stakeholders in the city in their marketing and communications. This may include sample versions of the narrative for key audiences i.e. visitors, students, investors and examples of how other places have utilised similar frameworks.

### **Timetable**

Project tender issued: 29 January  
Deadline for proposals: 14 February  
Interviews: w/b 19th February in Southampton  
Contract awarded w/b 19th February  
Interim report: 28th March 2018  
Delivery of final vision and narrative: 11th April 2018  
Delivery of promotion framework: 4th June 2018

### **Considerations**

In addition to earlier work on place brand and place promotion, there are a range of plans, strategic and practical, that seek to develop aspects of the city and promote it to specific audiences. All of them need to be read and considered in the development of

the city vision and city narrative. All of these plans will be provided to the successful consultant.

Companies or individuals putting forward proposals should assume that they will be working alongside, and closely with, a creative agency to deliver Part 2 of the project. A creative agency will be appointed by the task and finish group to develop the creative approach/translation of the city vision and narrative and provide the visual components of the promotional framework.

Part 3 of the project, the destination management plan, is closely connected to Part 1 and will utilise the outputs of Part 2. We anticipate that the destination management plan will set out clearly how proactive engagement and management of all visitors to the city including regional day visitors, overnight visitors, business tourism delegates and cruise passengers and prospective students, will contribute to achieving the city's ambitions as described in the vision. Where the destination management plan touches on promotion it will be expected to utilise the city narrative. Companies or individuals should take account of this in their proposals and demonstrate that they understand the relationship between vision, narrative and framework and practical plans to attract, inform and meet the needs of a broad range of visitors. If they have the necessary skills and experience to also deliver a destination management plan, they should indicate this in their proposal.

The maximum budget for Part 1 of this project is £25,000 inclusive of VAT and expenses.

Proposals should be no more than 10 pages, though biographies and examples of past work can be attached as appendices.

## **Requirements**

Proposals are invited from suitably experienced companies and individuals who should submit the following information:

- Knowledge and experience of undertaking the type work out as detailed above.
- The approach that would be taken to this project with an outline of the methodology to be used and a breakdown of tasks that will be undertaken.
- Evidence of ability to deliver project outputs a, b and c.
- Evidence that the relationship between Parts 1 and 3 of the project are understood.
- Examples of similar work undertaken for clients including information about how they have been implemented by the client including the outcomes that have been achieved.
- A description of the people who will undertake the work, the role they will perform.
- Biographies of the consulting team.

- A detailed project timetable taking account of the dates provided above.
- A breakdown of time and associated costs per person on the consulting team.
- Confirmation of availability an interview in Central Southampton w/b 19<sup>th</sup> February.

Deadline for receipt of proposals: **7<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

### **Evaluation of proposals**

Proposals will be evaluated by the Director of the Southampton Cultural Development Trust, the acting Chief Executive of Go Southampton! and a senior officer from Southampton City Council, who will also conduct the interviews.

Proposals will be judged on how closely they fit this brief. Specifically:

- The knowledge and experience of this type of work particularly in relation to a city of the size and nature of Southampton
- An understanding and appreciation of place and partnership dynamics
- The robustness and suitability of the proposed methodology
- Value for money
- Added value.

### Contact details

Proposals should be sent to in the first instance to: James Gough, Director of Southampton Cultural Development Trust: [james.gough@culturesouthampton.org.uk](mailto:james.gough@culturesouthampton.org.uk).

Should you have questions or wish to seek clarity on any of the brief please contact Melanie Sensicle Director, Melanie Sensicle Consulting: [melanie@melaniesensicleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:melanie@melaniesensicleconsulting.co.uk)