

Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 17 July 2023

Title: 1066 Country Marketing

Report of: Joe Powell, Head of Housing and Regeneration

Cabinet Member: Councillor Timpe

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To approve that Rother District Council becomes the accountable body for the 1066 Country Marketing Partnership, to include the transfer of 1066 intellectual property, budget and website to Rother District Council.

Decision Type: Non-Key

Officer

Recommendation(s): **Recommendation to COUNCIL:** That:

- 1) the Council become the accountable body for 1066 Country Marketing, to include its Revenue Budget, intellectual property and website;
- 2) the Council's Revenue Budget be updated to include the financial contributions to 1066 Country Marketing from Wealden District Council and Member Subscriptions, at an anticipated value of £35,000.
- 3) the final terms of transfer be delegated to the Director – Place and Climate Change in consultation with the Council Section 151 Officer and Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Tourism and Joint Waste Contract.

Reasons for

Recommendations: Without the transfer the 1066 Country Board is likely to disband and the brand, assets and the partnership will likely cease to continue with intellectual property being retained by Hastings Borough Council.

Introduction

1. 1066 Country is a partnership Destination Management Organisation (DMO) managed by an Executive Board consisting of representatives from local authorities, local reps, attractions' representatives, and English Heritage. The annual budget is made up of contributions from a combination of local authority members as well as member subscriptions which total £25,000. Hastings Borough Council (HBC) and Rother District Council both contribute £50,000 each and Wealden District Council (WDC) contributes £2,000 (the partnership only serves the Pevensey and Herstmonceux areas).

2. The current membership is made up of a range of different businesses from across the three council areas. The table below illustrates the mix of business that are currently members, by business type and location:

	HASTINGS	ROTHER	WEALDEN
Attractions	26	41	7
Food and Drink	16	29	4
Accommodation	12	43	10
Total	54	113	21

3. Over the last thirty years the Council has been working with and supporting its tourism offer through the 1066 Country Marketing Partnership. This is a membership-based partnership between local authorities and local businesses supporting tourism and encouraging visitors in the following ways:
- Marketing through digital channels; website and social media and through local and national marketing campaigns.
 - International promotion supporting overseas visits, working work with international contacts in the travel trade markets offering seasonal opportunities to visit 1066 Country. For example, a targeted newsletter went to 110,000 North American Travel Trade representatives this February 2023.
 - Press campaigns and editorials, highlighting individual businesses and giving a national platform to local tourism.
4. Appendix A provides more detailed examples of the range of press and promotional activity the 1066 Country Partnership undertook in December 2022 and January 2023.
5. Appendix B is an infographic produced from our 2019 data which provides an overview of the range of activity undertaken by the Partnership. In 2016, the Partnership agreed to undertake a review of its work and commissioned a marketing strategy and contemporary brand, based on consultation with users and non-users. The strategy research concluded that the '1066 Country' brand identity still has wide recognition and appeal and can be made to include the wider destination offer despite most commonly being associated with the historic and heritage aspects of the area.
6. On the back of the strategy, the Partnership invested heavily in the revived brand and the 1066 website. This included the development of a new logo and the 'Country of Origin' badge both of which are used by members on product and promotions.
7. £25,000 was invested in the new website and following a tender process both the Destination Management System (DMS) and the Enterprise Content Management System (eCM) provide a service which links tourism services across the country. Data shows we received 2,567,532 page views in 2022 and 686,442 visitors. These rank alongside some of the Country's top performing DMOs and clearly shows a demand for tourism in the area.

The Value of Tourism

8. Tourism is of significant economic impact to the Rother area. The 2019 Rother Tourism Economic Impact study conducted by Tourism South East showed that:

“In addition to the business turnover generated in those businesses directly receiving visitor income, successive rounds of expenditure, that is spending by these businesses on local supplies (indirect impacts) and spending by employers in the local area (induced impacts), is estimated to have generated £287.3m to the local 1066 area economy (the multiplier impact).”

9. The income into the district in 2019 came from 5.8 million days trips generating on average £29 per visit and 0.54 million overnight visits resulting in 2.27 million nights spent in Rother generating £51 per night with international overnight visitors spending an extra £4 per head.
10. In turn it is estimated that 6,024 Full-Time Equivalent Jobs in the local Rother economy have been supported. Many of these jobs are part-time or seasonal in nature and translate into an estimated 8,463 actual jobs and this figure had been increasing year on year prior to the pandemic.

Hastings Borough Council Withdrawal

11. At HBC’s February budget meeting, it was decided that they it will no longer be involved with the 1066 partnership, withdrawing its funding allocation to the Partnership to go it alone.
12. As of 1 October 2023, the current staff that support 1066 Country consisted of 1 full time officer and 1 part time officer, both of whom are currently employed by HBC. The intention is for these staff to be redeployed within HBC into roles that are yet unspecified.
13. The marketing campaign for this year 2023 has already been arranged and paid for and will roll out as planned over the summer. This includes posters at train stations in London and at Gatwick Airport, a social media campaign including an image competition. Images from this year’s campaign are at Appendix B.
14. The 1066 Country members are relieved to hear that the Council is considering the option of stepping in as the accountable body for the partnership and have indicated that they would continue their membership if the Council were to do so. 1066 Country members were vocal about their disappointment in HBC’s decision, particularly as current membership subscriptions have been paid until April 2024. It should be noted that WDC has agreed to work with the Council to continue to deliver the 1066 County Partnership.

Options

15. The accountable body needs to be a constituted organisation able to hold the financial accounts and sign contract agreements, this means either RDC or WDC need to hold this position. WDC has been clear that they are unable to do this at present but are supportive of the Council becoming the accountable body.

16. The Council would take on the contract for the website, paid up to 1 April 2024 and the copywrite on the intellectual property (IP). Two staffing posts, one for a digital officer to run the website and social media platforms, and one for tourism marketing officer to work with members and the international market, can be funded from the current budget. This will allow for the continuation of the service and the Council is exploring options to appoint to these roles.
17. As of the 1 October 2023, if the Council do not agree to take on the Partnership, as there are no other partners around the table able to do so at this current time, 1066 will disband, memberships will need to be reimbursed by HBC for the remainder of the year and the assets will remain with HBC but be lost to the Partnership. The impact on the Council would be that our tourism offer would reduce, and we would lose the benefits of the Partnership to our community. WDC has a separate DMO offer that it operates itself for the remainder of its area (outside of the 1066 Country area(s)).
18. If the recommendations of the report are adopted, officers will be able to present to the Partnership Board measures to reduce the cost of operating the Partnership, as well as opportunities to replace the income deficit left by HBC leaving the Partnership. A priority for the Partnership in the short term is to focus its energy on increasing membership subscriptions in order to replace the deficit in the budget left by the HBC's withdrawal from the Partnership.

Risks

RISKS	CONSEQUENCES	MITIGATION
1066 Country Marketing folds and Rother has no DMO	No DMO to promote tourism to domestic and international audiences	RDC work with the partnership to operate in the interim on a reduced budget; become the accountable body for the Partnership and inherit the existing budget, minus HBC's contribution.
HBC refuse to transfer the assets to the Partnership's new accountable body (RDC)	Assets need to be exclusively owned by the partnership to prevent misuse and use by other groups. The Partnership could fold.	RDC legal services will be employed to transfer the partnership's assets. Productive conversations are in place with HBC
RDC becomes the accountable body and takes over the contracts but the partnership doesn't meet the funding gap	RDC could be left to fill the funding gap.	RDC will not commit to any long-term contracts and any contracts that are not fully funded through the partnership.
Current staff employed by HBC are made redundant.	Key contacts and networks within the tourism and hospitality sector are lost to the partnership.	Look to agree joint working arrangements between the Partnership staff still employed by HBC.

RISKS	CONSEQUENCES	MITIGATION
		Alternatively, create new posts and advertise these externally with RDC as employer.

Conclusion

19. It is recommended that the Council take ownership of the 1066 Country Marketing Revenue Budget, website and IP so that the Council can sustain 1066 Country Marketing to March 2024 and beyond. It is also recommended that, for the transfer of ownership to be finalised expediently, the details of the transfer of ownership be delegated to the Director – Place and Climate Change in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Tourism and Joint Waste Contract, as they see fit.

Financial Implications

20. At the point of writing, the final value of the budget and cost liabilities being transferred from HBC are being finalised. Due diligence will be carried out in consultation with the section 151 officer, prior to final agreement to the Council transferring the 1066 Country Marketing Revenue Budget, website and IP.

Legal Implications

21. Officers are working with legal services to finalise the transfer of the Revenue Budget, website and IP to the Council. Officers will continue to consult with the legal service while negotiating any joint working arrangements with HBC or the development of new staffing roles to support the Partnership.

Human Resources Implications

22. HR are currently evaluating the new job descriptions to prepare for a scenario where new staffing roles may need to be created and advertised to support the Partnership.

Environmental Implications

23. The natural environment is one of the district's core assets and the inclusive partnership approach of 1066 Country Marketing is central to ensuring the Council maximises the economic benefits of tourism to the area while being mindful of our responsibility to protect the environment and achieve our carbon neutrality commitments.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	Yes	Access to Information	No
Risk Management	No	Exempt from publication	No

Chief Executive:	Lorna Ford (Interim Chief Executive)
Report Contact Officer:	Joe Powell
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Appendices:	A – Update December 2022 and January 2023

B – Impact of 1066 Marketing

Relevant Previous
Minutes:

Background Papers: N/A

Reference N/A

Documents:

UPDATE DECEMBER 2022 AND JANUARY 2023

Press pieces December

The I newspaper – 5 December: Rye Winter Weekend [Rye is a medieval Sussex citadel with cosy pubs, art galleries and smuggling history that's perfect in winter \(inews.co.uk\)](#) – (sequel to the Hastings one) [Hastings: The vintage seaside town with the UK's steepest funicular and largest beach-based fishing fleet \(inews.co.uk\)](#) **Collaboration with TSE**

Family First - four page editorial feature with images on South and South East England [Family First magazine](#) (Distributed to over 30,000 nurseries, preschools & schools for over 7,000,000 parents with children aged 0-12 years). Included Drusillas, Owens, Battle Abbey and Observatory Science Centre. **Collaboration with TSE.**

Landscape Magazine – castles and historic sites: Hastings, Battle, Pevensey, Bodiam, Camber Castle, The Stade and Old Town, EH lift, Pevensey Levels and Pevensey Bay, 1066 Country Walk.

Readership of the above: women with both time and money to spend on their interests, appreciate good quality brands and are always interested in products handmade by traditional artisans or makers. Over 70% of our readership holiday in the UK every year. Average issue circulation of 28,893. On sale 8 times a year (6-8 week shelf time), 13,995 subscribers

Average household income of readers working full time of 43K

January – press pieces and other activity

The Telegraph - a result from visit just pre Christmas by William Cooke – Forget Brighton (Hastings)

Daily Mail – due out Feb (Battle and surrounds) **Collaboration with Visit England.** Publication date – February 2023.

Main campaign for 2023 decided - Playne Design. Campaign to run until the end of 2023 – Moments.

Vakantiebeurs Tourism show in the Netherlands – reduced visitor numbers (65,000 this year), but our stand was non-stop throughout the four consumer days, all brochures distributed.

Awaiting report from TSE. Collaboration with TSE and Visit Eastbourne, Portsmouth, IOW, City Cruises and English Heritage – under the banner of England's South Coast.

Excursions Group Travel show in Twickenham – 3 stand sharers – Herstmonceux Castle, Rye Heritage Centre and Carr Taylor Vineyard. We were one of the busiest stands at the show. Partners happy with the contacts they made and the bookings made already. We showcased the whole of 1066 Country – profile of visitor, active retirees, day trips from Eastbourne and Essex, association group organisers.

Nordics travel operators' visit to 1066 Country as part of a bigger Visit Britain tour of the South East. Presentation by Kristin from Oxney Organic Estate, myself on 1066 Country, tour of Rye with town crier, visits to Great Dixter, Bodiam Castle, lunch at The Bell in Ticehurst, overnight and dinner Flackley Ash Hotel. **Collaboration with Visit Britain/ TSE**

Southern Railway – coming up: mentions for Hastings & Rye (we do keep pushing Bexhill too) in one of Weekend Wanderlust digital articles exploring the South Coast (also Eastbourne).

Website performance

1066 website received 2,567,532 page views in 2022 and 686,442 visitors. This is an incredible figure and is up there with some of Simple View's top performing DMO's. This clearly shows a demand for tourism in the area.

The Impact of 1066 Country Marketing

Tourism matters to 1066 Country



£704m of value*



12.5m visits*



11.5k jobs*
(Full Time Equivalent)



+9% growth in visitor spend
(2016-2019)

Tourism as a proportion of total area employment is above the England average

Rother: 15%

Hastings: 13%

England: 11%

Wealden↑: 20%

Vital pandemic support

A pivot from marketing support to business information provider:

- Frequent updates offering advice and grant information
- Website as an information portal

"I want to say that 1066 is the best and most supportive initiative/association we are/have been members of. Thank you for amazing work by the team this year - you are all stars." – Oxney Organic Estate, Dec 2020

Highly effective

A distinctive and market-focused destination brand



20.2k social media followers

+146% increase in traffic Aug '21 vs. '19 after website re-design



Digital partnerships deliver potential annual reach of 2.3m

A collaborative and engaged network



150+ members & partners

9 in 10 members renewed in 2022



Well positioned to help the destination to develop...



- Supporting the delivery of net zero
- A strong fit with the Government's DMO review
- Helping business growth & creating rewarding jobs with fair pay
- Attracting high-value audiences for culture

*Source: 2019 Cambridge Model Research

↑ Wealden results filtered on an electoral wards of Pevensey Bay and Herstmonceux & Pevensey Levels only to approximate Wealden's 'footprint' within 1066 Country