**Putting Medway on the Map – a brief to create our place narrative and branding and marketing.**

**Background – Rich Heritage, Great Future**

Medway is transforming. One of the largest urban areas in the south east outside London, Medway is pairing its rich heritage with a multimillion pound investment story of growth and regeneration to create a compelling success story for the future. We have set out a bold 20-year regeneration programme designed to turn Medway into a waterfront university city, with a thriving economic growth and sustainable communities - truly one of the best places in the country to live, work, learn and visit.

Many projects are already currently planned or underway including Chatham Place Making, Rochester Riverside, Strood Riverside, Victory Pier, Chatham Waters and Rochester airport – all delivering thousands of new jobs and boosting the area’s already strong economy. We are currently producing a regeneration vision for Medway that will be published in January 2018.

The local plan will see just under 30,000 new homes built by 2035 and new employment land become available. And just 34 minutes from London by train and with excellent links to major motorway, airport, port and rail networks Medway is strategically positioned between the capital and the continent and is the gateway to the county.

Medway is already home to 17,460 businesses. We are proud to be home to many small growing enterprises - 90% of our local businesses employ fewer than 10 employees. We also have a number of large companies including BAE Systems and Delphi and the area is becoming known as an entrepreneurial hub for engineering, manufacturing and innovative tech businesses.

Four universities have made their base at Medway attracting more than 12,000 students and two FE colleges are providing vocational courses, working in collaboration with local businesses to equip our young people with the skills they will need for the future. There are six grammar schools in Medway and four new free schools will open in the next few years.

Combined with a rich cultural offering that attracts nearly 5 million visitors each year, supports 6,000 tourism jobs and brings £313m to the local economy, Medway is set to become a leading waterfront university city – one of the best and most affordable places to live, work, visit and learn in the south east.

In 2018, we will be celebrating the 20th anniversary since the creation of Medway taking the opportunity to look back on the achievements and enormous progress made so far and to communicate the message for our vision and ambition for the next 20 years. This is an excellent opportunity to promote the area and its compelling, unique advantages through an innovative, asset based, partnership approach to place marketing. We believe this will be a vital role to help us attract new businesses to locate and invest in Medway, creating jobs and driving economic growth, and to attract new residents to the areas as well as cultural providers. We want to put “Medway on the map”.

Boosting Medway’s economy is fundamental to our vision, to stimulate a virtuous cycle of growth that sees rising skills and wage levels for local people, businesses moving to Medway, all supporting the planned growth in housing numbers in a sustainable way. We want Medway as a place to punch above its weight and lead the development of the Thames Gateway region. At the heart of economic growth is the need to tell a powerful, compelling, authentic story that draws in and builds the assets of the areas we are championing and connects them with the audiences we are seeking.

To help us achieve our objectives, we also want to create a greater sense of community within Medway sharing the desire to make Medway a success. As well as place branding, a critical and linked piece of work is “place doing” -actually getting local people to evangalise and spread the word for Medway. Although we have good relations with a number of local businesses and other stakeholders, we could and should do more to harness the voice, support and input of local people to help put Medway on the map.

**The project**

To help us do this we want to commission a creative organisation/individual to project manage the development and launch of a place branding and marketing strategy.

The key focus will be on place marketing for Medway and would cover the whole area including the five Medway towns of Chatham, Strood, Rochester, Rainham and Gillingham and the rural areas.

The place marketing strategy would incorporate and complement the Invest in Medway strategy being developed by Locate in Kent as well as the area’s developing destination marketing strategy.

**Objectives**

To position and sell the district and its compelling, unique advantages through an innovative, asset based, partnership approach to place marketing with a view to increasing businesses based locally, jobs, economic growth, students and people choosing to live in Medway.

To bring together stakeholder groups across Medway to form an effective partnership to promote the area jointly.

To target the right messages at the right people, through a co-ordinated campaign across all media, using a range of communication and marketing channels.

**Target audiences**

The overarching place marketing strategy needs to address four broad audiences, encouraging people to live, invest/work, visit and study in Medway. At the same time we want to reach out to those already invested and living in Medway to encourage them to become advocates for the place.

Specific target audiences within this themed segmentation include inward investors, particularly businesses such as developers and those involved in key niche areas that are the focus for growth in our economic development strategy

* Advanced Manufacturing
* Engineering
* Digital design agencies
* Education – within businesses (apprenticeships, skills training, FE provision)
* Business Services such as lawyers, accountants and other business service organisations.

We want to reach people who are already living in London or on the fringes of London and want a better lifestyle and more space –to persuade them of the benefits of living in Medway.

We want young people to understand the great opportunities Medway offers to study here as well as the opportunities to stay on and work here.

We want to reach leading influencers such as MPs and ministers whose views and actions impact directly on the resources we can attract to prosper as a place.

We also want to retain and attract enterprising people who are leaders and innovators, including graduates and young entrepreneurs.

We also want to reach other key influencers including the media and social media/bloggers with influence.

**What should be included**

1. A research and analysis exercise into the views of our stakeholders on Medway as a place to live, work, study, do business and invest, in the context of both its existing, and potential future offer from regeneration projects. This would include analysing evidence from existing research (such as our residents’ surveys) and carrying out additional research as necessary and agreed. This piece of work should be able to support the destination marketing and brand development process. Details of stakeholders will be provided where possible.
2. Creation of a positioning branding for Medway that would form the basis of a place marketing approach and be capable of being developed into a new destination marketing and possible council branding approach.
3. A shared, partnership, place marketing narrative which promotes the attraction of Medway and maximises its exciting assets and plans.
4. A set of place marketing key messages, suitable for using on a variety of online, social, print and broadcast media platforms, highlighted from the place marketing narrative and structured by audience segmentation.
5. A visual identity which interprets and reflects the content and feel of the shared place marketing narrative, is modern, fresh and appealing in look and feel and communicates the Medway vision and ambition.
6. A place marketing implementation plan identifying key audiences and setting out marketing / PR activities, channels and products.
7. Support for bringing together a wide range of stakeholders into a wider partnership programme which should focus on business engagement but could also include other stakeholders as appropriate e.g. public and third sector. We have a fledgling Place Board but suggestions on wider board involvement would be welcome. Suggestions for how we might make this ongoing work financially independent would be welcome.
8. Carry out any other work as is agreed necessary as part of the place marketing and brand development process. We would welcome your views as to any other specific pieces of work which may not have been considered within this project brief but would be beneficial for inclusion and could be accommodated within the project budget.

**Products**

The key marketing products from the commission will be:

* A place marketing narrative and key messages.
* A visual identity and language for place marketing which ‘animates’ the narrative.
* A place marketing visual identity toolkit with guidelines about using the place marketing ‘brand.’
* A set of images, photographs and / or video, that can be used online in place marketing activity.
* A place marketing implementation plan setting out activities, channels, platforms and products, including PR and social media, in the context of audience segmentation.
* Support for a formal launch of the branding and messages alongside a formal launch of the council’s Regeneration Vision in January 2018.

**Timescales**

We envisage that the project will commence in October 2017 and the development of the place branding and marketing strategy and products, as identified above, would take approximately three to four months. We would aim for a launch of the new positioning and visuals alongside the launch of our Regeneration Vision early in 2018.

**Management of the project**

The project will be commissioned by Medway Council but will be overseen by the Medway Council’s Medway on the Map Working Group, chaired by the council’s Leader. This group will steer, evaluate and review regularly the development and products of the commissioned work. Oversight for the work will also be provided by the Medway Place Board which includes leading stakeholders from business, education and the public sector. The project would be led by the Head of Communications.

**Who are we looking for?**

* The following skills and experience are considered essential to developing the place marketing strategy:
* Experience of using a participatory partnership approach to develop effective place marketing.
* Creative programme design and delivery skills.
* Excellent marketing and PR skills with a strong and successful experience in delivering powerful visuals
* Ability to gain an In-depth understanding of Medway, place and people, quickly.

**Evaluation**

It is essential that we are able to evaluate the success of the programme over the short, medium and long term. We wish to identify clear, measurable targets and KPIs from the start and measure on a regular basis. There are a number of evaluation criteria that we could use including but not exclusively:

* New businesses attracted to Medway
* Business rate income
* GVA
* Visitor numbers to our different attractions/hotels.
* Increased media profile
* Tracking stakeholder views including business satisfaction etc.
* Name recognition and awareness of the Medway brand
* Improved image/perception surveys
* Local pride