

Updating Enjoy the Broads Visitor Website
Report by Head of Communications

Summary: This report follows on from the Authority's approval of the new Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Broads in May 2016 when the updating of the Enjoy the Broads visitor website was identified as one of three priorities for the first year. It recommends that £10,000 from the Planning Delivery Grant Reserve be used to help fund the project.

Recommendations:

- (i) That the expenditure of £10,000 from the National Park Planning Delivery Grant budget for the redesign and updating of the content on the Enjoy the Broads visitor website be approved.
- (ii) To note that a review of resourcing of the Communications team is underway.

1 Background

- 1.1 Members will recall that in the Broads Authority meeting of 13 May 2016 three reports made reference to the work of the Communications Team and in particular the development of the visitor website and digital communications.
- 1.2 The report on the Sustainable Tourism Strategy specifically identified the development and maintenance of a 'high quality up-to-date destination website' and development and maintenance of 'a strong digital/social media presence and PR activity' as the two highest Broads Authority owned priorities for the first year. The third non-Authority owned priority was developing high profile wildlife packages and will be included in the future work of Broads Tourism and partners.
- 1.3 This year's Business Plan reflects these priorities and part of the feedback from members as part of their Annual Review included a perception that additional resources were needed in the Communications Team.
- 1.4 Members supported the principle of updating the Enjoy the Broads visitor facing website and reviewing the need to strengthen the Communications Team in respect of digital and social media and press.

2 Digital Media and Communications Team Resource

- 2.1 The Head of Communications and the Director of Planning and Resources are reviewing the Communications Team workload, priorities and aspirations

against available resource. This will include how any additional resourcing can be managed within an effective team structure given that PR and media relations was an area that members also felt was under resourced in addition to the ongoing website management, digital PR and social media identified as priorities in the Sustainable Tourism Strategy. Any proposals for additional resources will be considered alongside other priorities later in the year.

3 Redevelopment of the Visitor Website

- 3.1 While this review is ongoing there is an immediate need to tackle the technical, design and content issues to make the visitor website more effective; to bring it up to date as a top priority within the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and to take advantage of the opportunity presented by working with Broads Tourism; to update the marketing offer to members in a fresh drive to boost membership and to make the organisation sustainable in the long term.
- 3.2 If the work is not carried out there is a risk that existing and potential Broads Tourism members will lose faith in the effectiveness of the organisation to market their interests given that an effective visitor website is perceived to be the key marketing tool for destination management organisations.
- 3.3 Market analysis, development and delivery of new content and creation of a digital content strategy will need to be undertaken by an external party given the time constraints while resourcing within the Communications Team is reviewed and the skills gap within the team.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 At the May meeting a provisional estimated cost of approximately £30,000 was reported as being required for the redesign of the visitor website, market analysis, the creation and delivery of all new content and the development of a digital content strategy. This is in addition to the staff time to guide the project and for the upkeep of the website going forward.
- 4.2 Working with Broads Tourism the Authority's officers have taken forward the initial thoughts for the redesign of the site and are now proposing to use a Broads' tailored version of the National Parks UK's website design, bringing the Broads greater identity with the National Park brand and importantly saving around £5,000, as much of the coding already exists. The Head of Communications and the ICT Project Officer are working on detailed plans for how the design can work with the desired functionality of the new Broads' visitor website.
- 4.3 To enable this project, work on developing the Authority's Document Management System has been put on hold. This allows £13,700 of existing ICT budget (funded from the Planning Delivery Grant), to be available and a further £3,000 has been pledged by Broads Tourism. This leaves a balance of approximately £10,000 which could be funded from National Park Planning Delivery Grant Reserve.

- 4.4 The aspiration by the new Broads Tourism Marketing Steering Group, on which the Authority is represented by the Head of Communications, is that a new website would become a revenue stream for the Broads Authority and Broads Tourism joint marketing plan being developed in the New Year to boost visitor and membership numbers.

Background papers: [Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in the Broads 2016 to 2020](#)

[Minutes of the Broads Authority meeting of 13 May 2016](#)

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Broads Plan Objectives: TR1, TR2, TR3

Appendices: None