

# Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd

## Business Plan 2009-2010

(to be read in conjunction with the corporate plan 2008-2011)

### Contents

A.	Overview.....	2
B.	Guiding Principles .....	2
C.	Priority 1 - Marketing and Sales .....	3
	Objective 1: Business Tourism .....	3
	Objective 2: Leisure Tourism.....	4
	Objective 3: Commercial Channel Development .....	5
	Objective 4: Brand .....	6
D.	Priority 2 - Quality Improvement.....	6
	Objective 5: Quality Improvement .....	7
E.	Priority 3 - Infrastructure Development.....	7
	Objective 6: Infrastructure Development.....	7
	Destination Shaping .....	8
	Visitor Services .....	8
F.	Support Strands.....	8
	Objective 7: Intelligence and Insight .....	8
	Intelligence and Insight .....	8
G.	Corporate Targets .....	9
	Objective 9: Corporate Targets.....	9

## A. Overview

This plan provides the tactical response to the second year of the strategic corporate plan. 2009-2010 was always going to be a challenging year. The opportunities presented by the new city product unveiled during the second and third quarters of 2008-2009 were always going to be hard to match. However, due to the successes achieved during that time, expectations are rightly raised and the company must rise to that challenge. However, we now face a period of extreme economic uncertainty that will take all of our skills and experience to support the tourism industry through the turbulence.

Having handed over a highly effective Inward Investment function to the new Economic Development Company, we can now focus all our efforts on our specialism - tourism. We are well-placed to ride the storm of the recession but have to accept that there will be consequences and almost inevitably casualties within the industry.

Our approach to guiding Leicestershire's tourism industry through the recession is summarised below in 'guiding principles' and translated into tactical activity later in the plan.

Therefore, in spite of an economic position that was almost impossible to predict when the three-year corporate plan was developed, year two is about consolidation, prioritisation and leadership and does not require a change of direction. We continue on our journey to achieving our vision of being recognised as the best Destination Marketing Organisation in the country and now our partners and stakeholders expect nothing less of us. It is the strength of support and commitment behind the company that makes us well-placed to achieve such an ambitious vision.

## B. Guiding Principles

The macro economic situation will inevitably result in a downwards pressure on the price at which tourism product is sold. If this leads to maintaining or ideally growing volume, venues should be able to weather the storm. However, the basis of our corporate plan is to shape and present aggressively a destination that offers great choice, great quality and value for money. We will not position Leicestershire as a 'cheap' destination or one where the industry is driven by cost alone. However, we will exploit fully the fact that partners will be able to provide highly competitive pricing to maximise volume. Such a position has been backed up by recent research that suggests domestic consumers are more likely to reduce overseas travel and sacrifice other 'treats' to protect leisure visits which they are likely to switch to being UK-based. Therefore, our tactics for year two of the corporate plan are designed to move towards the longer-term objectives of the three-year plan whilst responding to the economic downturn;

- Marketing and Sales - position and sell aggressively Leicester and Leicestershire as a destination that offers great value Leisure break experiences

Use effective event bidding to significantly re position the destination as a major player in the MICE sector.

- Quality - maintain our position as the region's leading destination for quality-assured visitor facilities and expand the quality commitment into other areas
- Infrastructure Development - build on the extensive portfolio of capital projects already planned or underway across the city and county by identifying and lobbying for additional specific projects that will directly increase tourism volume and value.

- Leadership - provide increased leadership, support and guidance to the industry to help them through the difficult trading position

## C. Priority 1 - Marketing and Sales

### Objective 1: Business Tourism

*To further develop the performance of the Business Tourism and Events sectors and the contribution they make to the visitor economy*

*1.a: To increase national profile and numbers of visitors and their levels of expenditure by positioning Leicester and Leicestershire as a destination of choice for staging major events and festivals*

*1.b: To support the performance of the county's conference venues by implementing an agreed range of partnership activity to increase awareness of the offer*

KPI ref	KPI description/target from LPL corporate plan	ACTUAL 2008-2009	ACTUAL TARGET to achieve in 2009-10	TARGET to achieve by March 2011
1.1	Evidence significant influence over new bednights attached to conference events	1,700	2,000	1,000 bednights
1.2	Secure funding support from private sector partners for joint initiatives	£0	£5,000	£10,000
1.3	Increase unique visitors to the conference website	40,000	25,000	15,000 unique web hits
1.4	Bids presented to targeted events	0	4	4 bids
1.5	Increase active records on business tourism database	10	1,500	3,000

Over the last twelve months our role in developing and delivering business tourism has changed significantly. The Hotels and Attractions Sales and Marketing group has been redefined and now meets quarterly and largely provides us with an opportunity to update and communicate with partners.

There are a number of working groups which concentrate on specific business tourism activities including on-line marketing and Event Bidding.

We will have two key business tourism priorities in 2009/10.

1. The first is to ensure that the conferences@goleicestershire becomes an effective marketing tool to promote everything the destination has to offer. As there will be limited funding for the business tourism activity it is vital that this site is the hub of all promotional activity. By working with partners we can use the site to promote specific offers as well as targeting new customers with up-to-date offers. Once the site is credible partners will be more willing to work with us and support us financially to promote the destination-wide offer.
2. We have a huge opportunity with the regeneration of the city and county-wide developments to attract events and conferences with a strategic fit to the destination. To achieve this we will work with partners to develop a 'wish-list' of key events and conferences to attract them to hold their next event in the destination. We will then develop this into a proposal, or tender, to be presented with partners to the organisers. Our role will primarily be the development, co-ordination and presentation of the tenders. Although we will continue to be involved in the process, the delivery of the events will very much be the partners' responsibility.

## **Objective 2: Leisure Tourism**

**To promote Leicester and Leicestershire as a destination of choice for leisure tourism**

- 2.a To develop further campaigns and products that have demonstrated the ability and / or potential to deliver substantial bednights
- 2.b To implement effective brand and awareness building activity around no more than three agreed development brands
- 2.c To increase the number of overnight stays generated by the coach and group travel markets

KPI ref	KPI description/target from LPL corporate plan	ACTUAL 2008-2009	ACTUAL TARGET to achieve in 2009-10	TARGET to achieve by March 2011
2.1.1	Bednights (direct)	4,500	1,000	8,000 bednights
2.1.2	Bednights (indirect)		4,000	
2.2	Non public contribution	£100,500	£75,000	£50,000
2.3	Unique visitors to the short breaks website	220,000	220,000	240,000 unique visitors
2.4	Profiled active records on leisure tourism database	20,000	25,000	30,000 records

Our three campaigns are:

**Leicester** - Over the last year we have seen the completion of the massive regeneration of the city. This has resulted in an entirely new product offer which appeals to a new audience. The shopping offer based around Highcross Leicester and the unique Leicester Lanes boutique experience, combined with the cultural experience based around Curve Theatre and a number of existing festivals as well as the new 4-star boutique hotel Maiyango, has contributed towards a new product which we can now market to a number of clearly identified key segments.

In 2008/09 we concentrated much of our marketing activity around building the brand of the city and promoting the new offer, but as we move into 09/10 this will become less relevant as more people discover the city. Therefore it is our challenge to continue to build the brand awareness and develop the new shopping/culture offers but include existing festivals and 'moments' to increase the appeal of the city. These could include Comedy Festival performances at Curve.

In 2009 Leicester will be host to the Special Olympics. Although this week-long event will attract visitors to the city, it appeals to a very niche market. We will work with partners to ensure that we maximise all opportunities this event offers, including increased national awareness of the city and most significantly extending visitors potential stay to the city.

In amongst this we need to be constantly aware of price sensitivities. Spend on shopping and cultural activities may change and reduce in times of economic uncertainty and we need to respond quickly to this possibility. This can be achieved by working closely with partners to respond to changing demands.

**The National Forest** - The National Forest is an area of huge potential for the outdoor market. Current research has shown that there is good brand awareness of the forest in the local area, but less so in the further markets. Although day visitors to the Forest continue to be good, the overnight market has seen limited growth over the last few years.

In response to this we have developed a number of short break offers to raise brand awareness and target three clear markets which encourage overnight stays to the destination. Each focuses

on the specific unique strengths of the forest which differentiate it from nearby competitors. Because the Forest is still a very new offer, we are able to be guided by research and respond and adapt to market needs. However there is stiff competition from a number of active outdoor destinations close by and we need to ensure we develop and promote the unique 'forest in the making' message.

**Family Fun** - The family fun campaign was established in 2006 as Must See 3. Over the last three years it has developed into Stay, Play & Explore and now includes five attractions: The National Space Centre, Conkers, Twycross Zoo, Snibston, Twinlakes, as well as four hotels: Marriott Leicester, the Holiday Inn, Sysonby Knoll and Barcelo Hinckley Island.

Since 2006, the campaign has developed from being driven by unique experience to one driven almost entirely by price. This change in proposition has resulted in a dramatic increase in the amount of ticket sales, webhits and bednight bookings, making this campaign our most successful to date.

There are a number of factors contributing to this success including, close relationships with partners, simple and effective booking options (including on-line bookability), an extremely targeted marketing campaign and most importantly a very competitive price.

Effective marketing and competitive price will be our key priorities in 2009 when this market will be looking for good value for money.

**Objective 3: Commercial Channel Development**

*To increase sales of the county's tourism product through a range of traditional and online channels for the purpose of increasing visitor numbers and generating additional income for the product owners and the company*

KPI ref	KPI description/target from LPL corporate plan	ACTUAL 2008-2009	ACTUAL TARGET to achieve in 2009-10	TARGET to achieve by March 2011
3.1	Number of bookable tourism products on-line	80	90	100

Leicestershire was one of the first destinations to integrate fully the new Central Technology Solution into our web-site. We will continue to exploit all opportunities presented by this new resource. In support of positioning the destination as a market leader in value-for-money leisure experiences, we will be prioritising two areas:

- Affiliate web sites - we will seek to embed a real-time accommodation booking facility within the website of at least 25 of the county's leading attractions
- Resellers - we will use the results of pilot activity with lastminute.com during the previous year to develop closely targeted activity with national and international resellers that are operating in the value-for-money market place

To ensure the success of the above, we will need to maximise the number of Leicestershire accommodation providers that are making their product available for sale through the Central Technology Solution and will be working with our partner, Centes, to encourage eligible properties to take on the Property Management System to allow them to do so.

#### **Objective 4: Brand Development**

**To underpin strategic and tactical marketing by the development and implementation of a co-ordinated brand strategy for the city and county**

KPI ref	KPI description/target from LPL corporate plan	ACTUAL 2008-2009	ACTUAL TARGET to achieve in 2009-10	TARGET to achieve by March 2011
4.1	Average monthly unique visitors to tourism industry website	55,000	75,000	150,000
4.2	Destination features in national target media	15	25	8 features
4.3	Destination briefings	17	25	12 briefings
4.4	Review of travel guide content	-	20	30

Brand Development will involve a comprehensive and strategic PR and communications plan to support and promote the activity planned for all objectives. The main focus of this plan will feature the marketing campaigns of One Leicester, The National Forest and Family Fun, and key tourism development projects such as Donington Park, Special Olympics, River Soar and Grand Union Canal, Taxi accreditation and others.

The targeted elements of the PR and communications activity will be to secure high profile coverage for the destination in national press and trade publications, to co-ordinate briefings and familiarisation visits for strategic influencers and national/freelance journalists, and to provide ongoing support for local businesses through the tourism industry website at <http://tourism.goleicestershire.com>

Outline activity will include:

- National coverage - continue to work with national PR agency to secure high profile and quality coverage through features, press visits and articles for key freelancers and travel sections of national newspapers
- Local activity - develop and deliver a campaign of regular PR activity that will continue to position the company positively in the eyes of local stakeholders and tourism businesses through local media coverage
- Corporate profiling - focus on raising awareness of LPL's leadership role across local and regional business publications and broadcast media - position LPL as key opinion former on local tourism issues - important to re-position company in post-Economic Development Company era

There will be a particular push with up to 20 of the leading national and international travel guides to ensure that their representations of the destination are accurate and up to date and reflect recent changes

## D. Priority 2 - Quality Improvement

### **Objective 5: Quality Improvement**

*To improve the competitiveness, productivity and quality of the offer to all types of visitors to the destination.*

KPI ref	KPI description/target from LPL corporate plan	ACTUAL 2008-2009	ACTUAL TARGET to achieve in 2009-10	TARGET to achieve by March 2011
5.1	Quality-assured accommodation	58.00%	60.00%	60% of known stock
5.2	Attractions with national code of practice 'Our Promise to Visitors' or Visitor Attractions Quality Assurance Service	38	4800%	40% (40/96)
5.3	To increase the number of businesses with nationally-recognised green accreditation i.e. Green Start	12	30	50
5.4	Tourism business engagement. Number of businesses provided with 2 or more hours of consultation or a grant to a minimum of £250.	70	70	90

The core activity for the quality programme will be:

- Maintenance of 60% threshold for quality assured accommodation and growth in other quality assurance schemes
- Entry and success for destination attractions in the regional excellence awards
- Training and communication activity to raise awareness of the benefits of improved quality provision in both the private and public sectors
- The promotion of increased accessibility through the 'welcome all' initiative

## E. Priority 3 - Infrastructure Development

### **Objective 6: Infrastructure Development**

*Proactively influence and facilitate the investment needed to reinvigorate the tourism product and visitor offer*

KPI ref	KPI description/target from LPL corporate plan	ACTUAL 2008-2009	ACTUAL TARGET to achieve in 2009-10	TARGET to achieve by March 2011
6.1	Destination Charter Pathfinders	1	2	1
6.2	Customer rating of TIC services as very good or better by 80% of respondents to survey	89%	90%	80%

The objective of the investment strand is to identify and facilitate the right types of investment for the visitor economy. A significant amount of work has been undertaken this year to enable a clear approach, based on an assessment of regional priorities, for the period of the new plan. This role will include:

- Implementing the recommendations arising from the 2006/07 Tourism Investment Opportunities Review and Consultation
- Influencing other funding and programmes to ensure that visitor economy-related investment is considered and included

- Supporting the case for individual projects which have a strategic significance for the county and are funded or delivered by other agencies, particularly the Sub-Regional Strategic Partnerships (SSP)
- Working with private sector developers and others in support of new capital investments of benefit to the visitor economy

### ***Destination Shaping***

The role of the company as a DMO and our local authority partners in place-shaping are well defined by the agreed Partners for England *Charter for Destination Management*. The Charter aims to identify the needs, roles and responsibilities for those key organisations active within the visitor economy to enable excellent destination management, place-shaping and sustainable growth.

The company will work closely with EMT and our principal local authorities in developing the fundamental role they have in driving this agenda. A number of national pathfinder projects will be funded which embody the principles and practice of the Charter and promote best practice within destination management. This work will also support the integration of the visitor economy within the economic block of Local and Multi Area Agreements.

### ***Visitor Services***

The existing TIC network in the county will be strengthened further by maintaining quality control and ensuring consistent use of the county-wide visitor information network branding. Encouragement will be given to the wide-scale take up of best management practice.

Central to the visitor services network across Leicester and Leicestershire is the effectiveness of the ‘HUB’ tourist information centre situation in Leicester City Centre and the effectiveness of the call centre operation, currently outsourced. Both the location of the city centre TIC and the provision of call-handling services will be reviewed in light of changes to the city centre foot print and footfall and changing customer habits. However, regardless of such a review, emphasis will be placed on improving the current provision in line with the new national guidance developed with Visit Britain.

## **F. Support Strands**

### ***Objective 7: Intelligence and Insight***

***To inform strategy and provide insight to improve the effectiveness of programme activity and modernise delivery***

KPI ref	KPI description/target from LPL corporate plan	ACTUAL 2008-2009	ACTUAL TARGET to achieve in 2009-10	TARGET to achieve by March 2011
7.1	Campaigns evaluated through electronic polling; city, family fun, national forest	3	5	all

### ***Intelligence and Insight***

We continue to use the STEAM model to measure the volume and value of tourism. This will be especially useful this year in assessing the true impact of the global recession.

We will encourage actively the participation of tourist accommodation providers in the new on-line England Occupancy Survey, managed by VB, as a mechanism to capture levels of occupancy.

Evaluation of all major tactical marketing campaigns will continue to be handled by one agency on behalf of the regional network.

We will undertake our own evaluation of all tactical and, wherever possible, strategic activity by polling customers electronically to ascertain levels of current of future response according to the campaign objectives.

## G. Corporate Targets

### ***Objective 9: Corporate Targets***

#### ***To be financially stable and viable***

KPI ref	KPI description/target from LPL corporate plan	ACTUAL 2008-2009	ACTUAL TARGET to achieve in 2009-10	TARGET to achieve by March 2011
9.1	Value of reserves as a percentage of turnover	22.0%	15.0%	12.0%
9.2	Percentage of turnover generated from non-public sources	22.0%	25.0%	30.0%

DMOs are small businesses, subject to the same pressures and risks as any other SME. Therefore, the need to focus on core stability of the organisation should not be forgotten.