

Developing a Place Branding Strategy for Chichester District

**An overview of the existing district-wide brands**

Brand	Main Objective
The Great Sussex Way	The Great Sussex Way is the Destination Marketing Organisation representing the geographical area of the Chichester District, from the Downs to the Dunes. Beginning north of the Downs, taking in Petworth, continuing to Midhurst, travelling down to Chichester and across to the Manhood Peninsula, which includes Selsey and the Witterings.
Invest Chichester	Highlights the benefits of businesses, agents or developers locating in the district, providing information on the local economy, links to agents and developers and development sites as well as existing employment sites.
Visit Midhurst	The Destination Management Organisation for Midhurst.
Destination Selsey	Destination Selsey provides a virtual heritage and wildlife centre, events diary, local business directory and mobile device accessible walking trails and wildlife hunts for Selsey.
Chichester BID	Chichester Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led partnership which allows local businesses the power to decide what improvements they want to make in their city centre. Helping accelerate regeneration by providing services, projects and solutions that fall outside the public sector remit. Bringing together more than 625 local businesses and organisations, Chichester BID is dedicated to delivering an innovative programme of projects and services to support the city centre and local economy.
Petworth Vision	Petworth Vision is a Community Interest Group formed to work collaboratively with partners, seeking opinions of residents, businesses and visitors to gain a cross section of views on how Petworth can be improved to benefit the community, implementing

	projects and actions.
Bracklesham and East Wittering Vision	A Vision Steering Group for East Wittering and Bracklesham has been set up, with the main focus having been to consider a project for landscape enhancements within the area, along with the development of a consultation programme to help to determine the future priorities for the parish.
Midhurst Vision	Midhurst Vision Partnership has been developed as a Community Interest Company to collaborate on and deliver a shared vision for the future of Midhurst town, delivering projects which will benefit the local community.
Chichester Vision	Chichester Vision, through a number of key partners in Chichester city, focusses on actions for delivery within Chichester city.

### **Gaps in branding in the district**

- There is no overall brand for the whole district to cover the varying elements of the district, involving business, tourism, culture, etc.

### **The costs, benefits and challenges of developing a new brand and identity plan for the district**

#### **Costs**

If it is considered a project worth pursuing, it is proposed that a place making brand expert is employed to facilitate the process. Based on previous estimates of costs taken to the Chichester Tomorrow Vision Steering group, it is anticipated that this work would cost in the region of £50,000 - £65,000 for the development of a place making brand, there would then be ongoing promotion costs.

#### **Benefits**

The development and delivery of a Place Brand Strategy can provide a shared narrative for the district, with consistent messages for all stakeholders.

Brands that have a unique and compelling proposition help underpin places as desirable tourist destinations, attractive business locations and places local residents are proud of, while others aspire to live in them.

Towns and cities across the UK including York, Bath and Shrewsbury have already shown the positive impact that a 'place brand' can have, including inward investment; business development; economic benefits; and an increase in tourism.

The development of a Place making brand could provide a strong narrative that sums up the key elements of the district which include location, culture, history, future aspirations and community, all of which are supported by a coherent and professional visual identity. It is anticipated that any place brand would help to successfully tell the story of the area.

A consistent, single, strong voice and image for the district would assist with promoting pride in the area and improve reputation.

The development of a Place Brand will help to show the district's personality as well as its places, creating a clear identity - owned by all and used consistently, that everyone can celebrate and take pride in.

The brand, messages and sub-brands could be applicable across a variety of applications including for example, signage, wayfinding, printed publicity materials, digital media and light displays.

## **Challenges**

It is much easier to focus on a city or a town to get buy-in to a place making brand than it is for a whole district.

The success of a Place Brand Strategy is dependent on Stakeholders, communities and businesses in the district agreeing that a Place Brand Strategy is required and fully embraced by partners. Without this it is challenging to deliver and sustain a district identity.

Stakeholders, communities and businesses must agree the understanding of the key objective of the brand.

The nature of Chichester district, with its varying nature with the city and rural towns increases the challenge of producing a Brand which is reflective of the area.

A decision is required in terms of how a Place Branding project would be resourced. This is required in both the short and longer term.

It is recognised that there are already exist a number of partners/stakeholders with their own distinctive brands, these include but are not limited to: Chichester BID,

Chichester Tomorrow, The Great Sussex Way (GSW), Petworth Vision, Midhurst Vision, Destination Selsey and BREW vision.

If a Place Brand is developed consensus must be reached as to what is most appropriate.

Building a resilient place brand is a long term commitment which needs to retain the flexibility required by the evolution of places.

It is important to differentiate between the council brand and that of the place – i.e. the council brand is that of the organisation and the services it provides, whereas the place brand is about the place or places that the council, businesses and communities serves. It is not about the council, its partners, or individual businesses. Keeping the Place Brand separate from the council brand is vital for clarity of understanding about what is being done and what the objective is to be achieved. The distinction between place and council brand doesn't mean that the two should not be used together in a complimentary way, only that the demarcation should be clear, and clearly understood by everyone using the brands.

The Place Brand must be authentic, relevant and appeals to a wide audience, including

- Students considering where to study
- Shoppers looking to enjoy the city and town's ambience and variety
- Tourists visiting the district (especially cultural tourists)
- Businesses and entrepreneurs thinking of investing in the district, and
- Residents who love living in Chichester District

### **Feedback from partners**

Petworth Vision:

*For some years I have been involved with Visit Chichester, which, as you know, has rebranded as The Great Sussex Way, and is primarily funding by CDC and the BID. The company has worked very hard to create a new brand and has successfully repositioned itself to include the other centres in the district, beyond the city of Chichester. Their Great Escape digital campaign had great reach and engagement online and in the national press. The board is drawn from people working in different parts of the Chichester district, and momentum is building as the profile of the district rises.*

*Given the existence of The Great Sussex Way, we would struggle to understand the need for any additional destination management company that might dilute resources or engagement.*

Destination Selsey:

*The majority of the towns within the district are forming their own individual place brand and a strategy to take each of the towns forward. It is Chichester City which appears most in need of a strong identity which works with its heritage and understands the direction to take for its future long-term sustainability. In addition to this is consideration for the identity of the developing areas of Southbourne and Tangmere.*

*The examples which you give in your correspondence are all either Cities or Towns and each has a Council site and a 'Visit' site. I can find no examples of a district 'Place Brand', there seems only to be examples of counties- Cornwall, Yorkshire, Somerset etc.*

*Will the benefits to a Place brand outweigh the cost to the public purse when Chichester as a district is over saturated by place brand identities. There would initially need to be created a cohesive strategy on how the brands could fit together, make sense and complement each other. This before working out a brand strategy for how the Place brand fits into the mix and benefits Chichester District.*

*How do you envisage DestinationSelsey.co.uk/Selsey Town Council supporting you in your development of a Place brand?*

### **Anticipated process if a Place Brand Strategy is developed**

The anticipated process (as per the Local Government Association's recommendations) will include the following steps:

1. Partners to establish the objectives for the Place Branding project.
2. Ownership, Governance and Budget – project group set up, budget agreed.
3. Definition of the area for branding.
4. Research – seek external perspectives to ensure brand has relevance and authenticity. Involve quantitative and qualitative research (i.e. consultation and focus groups). Include questions relating to whether residents feel proud to say they live in the area, how businesses feel about the future, explore positive and negative associations and how visitors feel about the area. This stage will include

consideration of previous consultations and exploration of what research has been undertaken by partners.

5. Determine how the Brand will be delivered – i.e. engage consultants.

6. Brand Building – two elements – (i) agree what the story of the place is – informed by research. This will encapsulate the strengths of the place and shared aspiration for the future. (ii) develop visual identity – i.e. brand assets such as colour palettes, logos, fonts, etc.

7. Development of Place Products which could include signage, website, promotion, film, place brochure.

8. Use the Brand – a minimum of five years – ensure partners exploit opportunities and develop a strategy for use.

9. Evaluation – test the impact of the brand, use of focus groups, research, investigate business footfall. Consider whether the brand has helped to increase inward investment, additional visits by tourists, increase in positive feedback from visitors, residents and businesses, etc.