



Bournemouth COASTAL BID



Background

Bournemouth Coastal BID, set up in 2012, is focused on eight 'coastal village' districts. The vision, reconfirmed by businesses for 2017-2022, is that:

"The Coastal BID will raise the profile of Bournemouth as a destination, highlighting the uniqueness and variety of the individual trading districts, to support your business."

Destination marketing and branding is of great importance, as over 50% of the businesses are tourism based. The BID is focused on off-season activity while council's tourism team is focused on high season activity and promotion.

BID's approach to place branding

In 2012 sixty businesses responded to the first BID survey for business plan priorities, identifying 'more traditional' priorities that included events and marketing e.g. the annual Wheels Festival held on the seafront that attracts around 700,000 visitors and residents. As the business plan is now in year four that view and approach is changing. The business survey for 2017-2022, responded to by 111 businesses, identified place making as a priority, along with destination marketing and street safety.

BID's use of heritage in place branding

The focus on coastal villages has led the BID to develop distinct identities for each 'village', along with improving the environment and quality of the area. Businesses express local pride in their place and, along with local built heritage, this has shaped the identity of each coastal village:

"Westbourne has a very beautiful Victorian arcade and is an affluent shopping area with quirky independent shops and other heritage assets such as churches and it is in a beautiful setting. This is the starting point for distinctive marketing as an urban village."

The BID has supported events such as The Great Exhibition of Boscombe, another of the coastal villages. The Boscombe place brand has developed around being a market 'town' with a cultural and vintage quarter in an area with a strong and interesting local heritage, including the Romantic poet Percy Shelley's family.

The BID particularly supports activities rooted in and developed by the community, such as the Shake and Stir vintage festival in Southbourne. This has the potential to become a signature event and the BID is

working with the organisers to develop the event into a SW Vintage Festival.

The BID has been testing heritage trails and developed a new wayfinding system that highlights the history and story of place. Further work is planned, including exploring the use of digital technology.

Benefits of heritage/place branding activities

In the past, businesses' engagement with local heritage assets had been limited. This has changed and businesses want to the BID to become more involved in caring for and maintaining heritage, as businesses become more aware that improving heritage assets improves how places present themselves. Consequently, much of the BID's investment is in awareness marketing e.g. a London billboard campaign.

However, it is difficult to assess the direct impact of these activities on, for example, the number of hotel bookings that result. Bournemouth is competing with other seaside resorts and cities such as Brighton, Blackpool and Southampton and businesses currently place great importance on achieving a return on their investment.

Challenges to delivering heritage/place branding activities

The Bournemouth place brand is still evolving; in part due to difficulties in defining the town's uniqueness. There is a Bournemouth brand and underneath that the 'coastal villages' brands. While most people identify the Blue Flag beach as strength, this is not unique.

The rate of building development risks compromising the town's built heritage. Access to expertise is important because it enables the BID to actively work with communities to better understand heritage and ensure that in twenty years time the town will still be able to promote physical heritage assets.



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