

Wat Tyler Country Park/Greengrid research

2 May 2007

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Part I - regional context

Why put Wat Tyler Country Park in a regional context?

There are many reasons to consider Wat Tyler Country park in a regional context, not least the need for financial support from regional sources.

External visitor numbers

Currently the vast majority of visitors to the park are local, repeat visitors. Increasing the number of visitors to the park will require an increase in both local, regional and national (perhaps even international) visitors.

More visitors from outside the region would be a great boon not only to the park but also the local and regional economy. Local job creation increases income into the area, as will increased numbers of visitors. While an increase in visitors from within the region will increase the local income, as has already been noted by Wat Tyler Country Park and the Essex tourism strategy this will have little effect on the overall regional economy - merely displacing income from other counties. However, it is worth noting that some visitors may be encouraged to stay in the region if facilities are improved and/or better match their needs, which would result in a net gain in regional income.

Visits from outside the region - with the possible exception of those close to the border (i.e. from London and Kent) require more pull than one single attraction can provide, however, and this is one of the main reasons a regional context is needed. Being part of the Greengrid offering - and taking advantage of the facilities associated with this (regional and national promotion, funding etc) is a great boon and a mutually beneficial proposal. Greengrid benefits from the presence of a key demonstrator project at the heart of its' catchment area; Wat Tyler Country Park benefits from the support, kudos and marketing resources offered by Greengrid, but mostly from the fact that South Essex now has a product of interest to a far greater number of external visitors. All the resources which fall under the Greengrid banner therefore support each other in this respect.

Putting Wat Tyler Country park in a regional context therefore improves the portfolio of the region as a place to visit for green space, sustainability and cultural and industrial heritage - encouraging visitor numbers from outside the region and boosting the local economy.

Funding from regional bodies

As stated before, regional bodies have regional targets. While encouraging local visitors may benefit the regional economy to a small extent, the main aim of funding bodies will be to encourage visits from outside the region, but also to create employment and improve skills and education.

Plans for Wat Tyler Country Park are ambitious, and when completed will make the park a showcase for innovation - especially in sustainability - in the region. Business tourism will be especially important to bodies such as EEDA - targeting the marketing of this offering to developers and those with an interest in sustainability will be an important part of encouraging inward investment. This is also in line with the aims of the Greengrid strategy; encouraging sustainable development in South Essex.

Skills development will also be important to setting Wat Tyler Country Park in a regional context; plans for a skills academy and trade school will make the park a potential centre of excellence for sustainable development skills.

All of these activities will rely on good communications in order to ensure uptake; there is little point providing these services if no-one knows they are available. The limited provision for marketing in the current plan does not seem sufficient to do this - or to communicate the need to get further funding.

The regional tourism strategy

Wat Tyler Country Park's timescales for development could not be more fortuitous. Initiation of the project is taking place as the new East of England Tourism is set up; completion of the new facilities in 2009 coincides with their planned communication of the region's heritage.

The park will fit into many aspects of the possible regional tourism strategy. It provides resources for cultural tourism (the sculpture park), heritage, green tourism and industrial heritage. Not only does this fit with regional tourism strategies, but also the Greater Essex Prosperity Forum's tourism growth strategy.

Both these facts should help Wat Tyler Country Park leverage support from sub-regional and regional organisations. It is important that communication activities take place at a regional level and beyond in order to secure results for the funding already in place. Further funding - and support from these bodies - is vital. Talks with EET and the Greater Essex Prosperity Forum should take place as a matter of urgency to develop a strategy which involves Wat Tyler Country Park as a key resource.

Greengrid's role

The success of Wat Tyler Country Park could play a huge part in the success of the Greengrid programme - especially the new focus on developers and businesses above casual visitors. The new developments planned for the park fit perfectly with the needs of the Greengrid strategy - especially if well communicated to developers both inside and outside the region. As such, it is in Greengrid's best interests to fully support the development - and in particular the communication - of Wat Tyler Country Park.

Greengrid's role is to take the brand and values of the park beyond the gates and into the sub-region.

Developers and Greengrid marketing

A large part of Greengrid's focus for the future is communicating their aims to developers working in the region, in order to encourage sustainable development. Plans for Wat Tyler Country Park fit well into this, and can be used to give the park a role as a demonstrator project and key case study for Greengrid. The technologies to be used - and the integration of trade schools and skills academies - will be of great appeal to developers. Both the business brand and educational brand, discussed in part II, should be used to communicate to developers.

Other activities and functions

Heritage and cultural fit - the national importance of Wat Tyler Country Park

Regionally funded/directed efforts to market Wat Tyler Country Park need to make more of the national importance of the park. The history associated with both Wat Tyler and the use of the land for munitions are important factors in marketing the country park - and in placing the park in a regional and national context. EU funding for development of cultural heritage should be sought if available.

Voluntary sector

The voluntary sector will be important to Wat Tyler Country Park as a source of staff. These staff need to be ambassadors for the brand and as such are vital to the success of the park. It is recommended that Wat Tyler Country Park or Greengrid contact COVER - the community and voluntary forum for the Eastern region - with regard leveraging EEDA for support.

Part II - branding

What is branding?

"A great brand raises the bar -- it adds a greater sense of purpose to the experience, whether it's the challenge to do your best in sports and fitness, or the affirmation that the cup of coffee you're drinking really matters."

Howard Schultz, CEO Starbucks Corporation

A brand is much more than just a logo or colour palette. A brand should bring to mind particular feelings and memories for the target audience; a brand can engender feelings of loyalty (or disloyalty), of familiarity, and awareness of the values and ideals related to a service or product. The Virgin brand, whether in relation to financial products, flights, music or trains aims to bring a sense of youth, vibrancy, excitement and fun to a consumer; the Sony brand, in contrast, should bring an assured feeling of expertise and quality which demands a premium price. Neither can do this with just a logo, a name or a colour; a brand needs to influence every contact with a customer from advertising to customer care.

While this may seem mere marketing speak, there is evidence of the strength of brands and brand loyalty. The Virgin brand is a strong example of this; a family of incredibly disparate products and services joined only by a shared audience. Brand disloyalty can also be used as an example; boycotts of Neslé being led by one product produced by the company and affecting (to a small extent) sales of many others.

Branding can form complex hierarchies of brands within brands. Procter and Gamble, for example, has one brand identity - scientific, successful, expert; while within that sit many other brands from shampoos to pet foods, each with their own identity and ideals.

The brand

Why brand?

Why should Wat Tyler Country Park be branded? Currently the park produces a range of materials, from print to electronic, all falling under the umbrella brand of Basildon District Council. Materials use the council's identity throughout. In addition, the park itself currently shows no consistency of signage or visitor experience; leaflets available are branded RSPB, Basildon District Council or not at all, staff and visitors cannot be distinguished from each other by the casual observer, and the facilities available are completely unlinked. To the normal visitor, Wat Tyler Country Park is a collection of unrelated and unconnected facilities linked only by their location in an amorphous open space, possibly owned by the RSPB - who have the strongest branded presence in the park.

So why not use the District Council brand? As explained above, a brand brings with it values, feelings and associations which may be positive or negative. At its best, any overtly public body brand will instill feelings of predictable competence, routine and public availability; at worst, tax-wasting, bureaucracy and incompetence. None of these - not even the positive values - should be associated with a visitor attraction, regardless of the truth they may or may not have.

Of course, a link to the council should remain, but to try to promote the park via the council pushes the wrong messages. What should instead be done is to establish a strong and positive brand for the park, and to bring those brand values and associations back to the council. Suggesting "if you like the council, you'll appreciate Wat Tyler Country Park" will be far less successful than suggesting "if you like Wat Tyler Country Park, you'll appreciate the work of the council". The achievements and abilities of the council itself are never in question; instead, we are trying to address perceptions, and it is far easier to create new perceptions of

an interesting project than to change ingrained perceptions of a well-established political body.

A brand can also become a revenue stream, as is often the case with museums and visitor attractions. T-shirts, posters, even pencils and paper can carry a brand and allow visitors to express their association with it. Once again, visitors are far more likely to want to show other people they have an interest in heritage and wildlife - expressed through the Wat Tyler Country Park brand - than they will want to show an association with a district council.

How to brand

While a brand is more than just a logo and name, these both have a vital role to play. The name and logo should evoke the values of the brand.

Brand values are those feelings you want people to associate with your product or service. Developing brand values should take into account both what the brand owner wants the customer to associate with the brand and what the customer wants to associate with the brand; if you try to make a financial product fun and exciting but all your potential customers would rather have a dependable, predictable product, you will lose out. The best brand development processes take a view of the current market, of the views of customers, and the needs of the brand owner.

Colours are important; different colours naturally evoke different feelings in different cultures. In the UK, for example, red evokes feelings of danger (and excitement); blue to relaxation and calming.

Names, too, can evoke strong feelings. New words with roots in existing words - or with Latin and Greek roots, which seem familiar to many people - are often used. However, Wat Tyler Country Park has an existing name already having some strength and positive connotations. The name can also direct the development of the associated logo.

The logo naturally follows from brand values, colours and name. A logo can be something as simple as a name using a particular typography; it can be an abstract image or shape; or it can be a simple line drawing. A logo should be instantly recognisable, should convey something of the brand or product even to those unaware of what the product is, and should be easily adaptable for use in a variety of media, from print to web to - especially important in this case - to signage.

When to brand

While it takes many years for a brand to become properly established in the public consciousness - at least at a national or international level - the ground-work associated with brand development should start early.

In the case of new products, brand development takes place as part of product development, with branding directing the development of product features and product features directing the development of the brand. In the case of pharmaceutical and medical products, branding can take place up to seven years before the product is due to come to market; consumer products operate on a far shorter time-scale but are generally available far longer term. The Coca-Cola brand was first established in 1907¹ and, with a few subtle changes over the years, has retained the same brand values for all that time.

An existing product can be branded or re-branded, however. There are dangers associated with re-branding; changing an established name to something less recognisable - especially if it's something abstract - can be a disaster. The Royal Mail's attempt to re-brand as Consignia was short-lived; the Royal Mail had an established customer base who were loyal to the original brand, and the name carried much weight. Taking an established product and drawing on its strengths to distill a brand can work well, however - Marks and Spencers' re-branding of their food products, concentrating on the luxury appeal they have, has been a great success.

Branding should follow a set timeline:

- Determine brand values

¹ http://www.brandchannel.com/features_profile.asp?pr_id=101

- Develop name
- Develop logo and palette
- Get buy-in for brand values within parent company/organisation
- Communicate brand

Buy-in from the parent organisation is vital; the people working most closely with the brand will be those instilling the values into the public and spreading the vision. Any cynicism among these people will dilute the brand and bring cynicism to the customer.

Audiences and markets

The most important part of any product is, of course, the customer. Wat Tyler Country park will have three main customer groups; the consumer market, the educational market and the business market. Support from the public sector is also vital to the success of the park, so they will also be considered in this discussion.

The consumer market

In the year 2006-2007 260,000 visitors came to Wat Tyler Country Park, and this figure is growing - 300,000 are predicted for the year 2007-2008. Around 70-75% of these visitors originate locally. The consumer market is currently the main - if not only - source of visitors.

More research is needed into visitor behaviour and motivation. Initial observations show - at least for week-days - a high number of older (60+) visitors, school activity groups visiting the RSPB facilities and mothers bringing children to the play areas. Weekend trends may well reflect this - with more parents bringing slightly older children to play and take advantage of the open space, and of course very few (if any) schools or other educational trips.

As an outdoor attraction, it is reasonable to assume that there is a seasonal trend for visitor numbers, with the greatest number of casual visitors, parents and children in the summer, with "specialised" audiences (bird watchers and nature-lovers) following their own seasonal trends. Autumn and winter may be prime periods for watching waterfowl on the salt flats.

Future developments may well extend the audience reach of the park but should not be allowed to alienate this current audience. Indeed, the current audience should be the first people consulted on possible brand values and logo/signage requirements; it is recommended that an audience survey and informal short interviews are carried out as soon as possible. While the aim of future work (especially for Greengrid) may well be to bring in a far greater proportion of non-local visitors, current visitors will already have established ideas about the values they associate with the park, and these are far easier to work with - and build upon - than a completely new set of values.

The 2012 Olympics bring an ideal opportunity to greatly increase visitor numbers and extend the appeal of the park to a national and international level. Proximity to London, the proposed Olympic Village and the Mountain Biking events at Weald Country Park give all Greengrid projects a massive potential audience, although difficulty lies in maintaining these visitor numbers. Converting large numbers of national and international visitors into sustainable numbers of visits from extra-regional sources will depend greatly on the success of the individual brands involved and the Greengrid marketing strategy as a whole. Wat Tyler Country Park's timelines fit perfectly into the Olympic timelines; completion of the work being carried out in 2009 allows several years' contingency plus "settling in" time. It is important that the park does not look like it has been hastily made pretty for the Olympics; it should give the impression that it is a long-term project which will be available long after the buzz surrounding the Olympics has subsided.

Currently little is made of Wat Tyler Country Park's links with heritage - either the links with Wat Tyler himself or the industrial use of the land. There is much interest in industrial heritage and few examples of important ex-industrial sites in the East of England; the fact explosives and arms were manufactured on the site will give it some kudos with young male audiences. Links with Wat Tyler and the Peasant's Revolt of the early 14th century could also be exploited. The continuity of use for the land in some capacity - and perhaps the idea of revolution (against an oppressive state - and now the use of revolutionary new environmental technologies and techniques) could well feed into branding and marketing activities.

The educational market

Education is a large part of Wat Tyler Country Park's offering, even if this is not solely delivered by the park or the District Council but by the RSPB. It should be remembered that school children, although not direct decision makers, do have "pester power" and while overtly or directly encouraging this should be avoided, there is no getting away from the role of children as advocates, albeit in the local context rather than regionally. Teachers, teaching assistants and parents involved in school trips also serve an advocacy role.

The first impression educational visitors will get of the park, regardless of their reason for visiting, will be controlled by Wat Tyler Country Park, and so branding for educational visits remains important. While many of the materials supplied will come from the RSPB, anything else provided should conform to the Wat Tyler Country Park brand.

Although a small market, there are also educational decision makers who make the choice to use Wat Tyler Country Park as a resource; although largely driven by curriculum and geography there is always the chance that other resources may become available in the area and establishing a competitive advantage at an early stage would be good.

There are some similarities between the educational market and the business market and returning visitors (see below) driven by past educational visits may be a factor to consider. While this will be a small proportion, and a long-term market, much tourism is driven by reminiscence and it should not be overlooked. Education of older groups - such as sixth-form and undergraduate groups - will bring more repeat visits and higher revenue (especially in the local economy outside the park) as these groups will have higher disposable incomes and more freedom to use them. These groups will be educated as part of the trade schools and skills academies and the brand will need to appeal to these people as well.

The business market

Business tourism is an important part of the regional offering and something which Wat Tyler Country Park does not currently cater for. Business tourism accounts for 26% of visits to the UK, with an estimated 40% of business tourists making a return as a "leisure" tourist, often with family².

East of England Tourism (EET) are concentrating their efforts on business tourism over the year 2007/2008, continuing this work over a three year period³. Learnings from this work can direct marketing for Wat Tyler Country Park, and related to this will be the East of England Development Agency's work on a business tourism strategy, which will contain useful data and should be used to direct marketing activity.

While currently Wat Tyler Country Park has little provision for business tourism, it will form a part of their future activities. This does mean that data gathering is made more difficult; there are no current customers to survey, and while other data can be used to identify trends the fact that there is no current brand perception cannot be avoided. Of course, this also means that there are no brand perceptions to re-shape or overcome; starting from a clean slate allows Wat Tyler Country Park to pitch their offering at whichever business tourism market segment they wish, in whichever way they wish.

The industrial heritage and cutting-edge sustainable techniques used to build the new developments at Wat Tyler will both be important in branding for a business tourism market.

Branding of the business and consumer offerings should not be carried out in isolation; while the two brands could be kept separate (and will have some very different brand values) there will be some common ground. Most important, however, are the 40% of business tourists who make a return leisure trip; making them aware of the non-business brand and what it offers will help draw in more visitors, often from outside the region.

² Exceeding Expectations - a tourism growth strategy for Essex

³ Exceeding Expectations - a tourism growth strategy for Essex

Public sector partners

It is important that public sector partners buy in to the ideals of the brand at an early stage. They will have an important role to play promoting the park, both to customers and to other public sector bodies who may provide further funding. The public sector are likely to have an interest in all aspects of Wat Tyler Country Park's work - education, consumer and business - and as such these brands will all play a part.

Recommendations

Bearing in mind the needs of the four distinct audiences, it is recommended that an overarching Wat Tyler Country Park brand is developed with three sub-brands, each focussing on a different market. While these sub-brands will encompass the values of the main brand they will also introduce their own values, and subtle differentiation of the logos - perhaps with regard palette or tag-line - will differentiate the sub-products. Similar happens with pharmaceuticals and brand extension - if a new delivery method is introduced for a drug the branding will remain much the same with an extra word added.

The overall brand should be used to communicate with public sector partners and funders, while sub-brands should be used to communicate with the appropriate audiences. Signage within the park should take the consumer brand, while outside the park can use the overarching brand - maintaining consistency of message while still being relevant to all audiences. Audiences will be differentiated by offering once within the boundaries of the park.

Logos - and logo overload

With every project of this nature there is a risk of "logo overload" - with the brand being diluted by a vast range of logos being used on publications, signs and so on. Many funding bodies insist on the use of their logos on projects they are involved in; Wat Tyler Country Park also falls under the Essex Alive and Greengrid brands. It is also important to use associated brands to build the credibility of the park; the power of the RSPB brand should not be underestimated. Further discussion is required to determine the extent to which the RSPB wish to be involved in branding and signage work on the site (and externally) and the extent to which the brand is important to visitors.

It is recommended that supporting bodies are acknowledged openly but separately to other signage on the site to avoid diluting the Wat Tyler Country Park brand. The Greengrid brand should be given prominence on consumer-focussed publications, however, as the most direct supporter - and the most relevant to the target audience. The Greengrid brand should give more weight to Wat Tyler Country Park than that of regional or national supporting organisations which may not be known to consumers. The Thames Gateway South Essex/ EEDA brands should be given more prominence on business-focussed materials as their messages are more likely to be of importance to businesses. Developers form a special audience, however, who should have the aims of Greengrid explained to them openly and clearly.

The Basildon District Council/Countryside Service brand will be of most importance to educational visitors.

Marketing

While the park has ambitious plans for increasing visitor numbers, these are not matched by provision for marketing the park to realise these aims, in part due to a reluctance by the Heritage Lottery Fund for their support to be used in marketing activities. Once a brand is in place, marketing activity will need to be carried out. The majority of this activity is outside the scope of this research; however, the use of a website will be discussed in section III.

Regional tourism strategy and funding/planning

Much of the marketing activity for Wat Tyler Country Park is aligned with the aims of the Essex Tourism Growth Strategy and the EET strategy. EET will be focussing marketing activities on cultural heritage in 2008/09 and countryside pursuits in 2009/10 - both align well with the needs of Wat Tyler Country Park and fit the timescales in place. Leveraging funding and support from Essex County Council and East of England Tourism will be important in marketing the park and making the most of the limited resources in place.

It is recommended that a marketing strategy is developed in consultation with Essex Tourism and EET following the decision on current funding applications.

Conclusions

Establishing a strong brand for Wat Tyler Country Park is an important activity which needs to take place before any further work which may involve communication and public engagement is carried out. A strong brand will build coherence and consistency and encourage new and repeat visits to the park; a brand can also become a revenue stream in itself.

Regardless of further activity to be carried out, and the provision of further funding or otherwise, a brand will need to be established in some form.

Low budget and contingency planning options

Branding need not cost the earth - especially in a case such as Wat Tyler Country Park when many of the elements needed - name, brand values, and public awareness - are already in place in some capacity. While provision is in place for website development in the current budget, this is not a significant amount of money, and should further funding be limited it may be worth considering producing a far more limited, flat "brochure" site while directing some of the website budget to branding. Establishing a brand should take place before website build, and will direct - and therefore reduce the cost of - the associated design.

Design will need to be carried out for signage, provision for which has also already been made, and some of this budget should also be redirected towards brand development. Once again, development of a strong brand will direct and limit design of signage and reduce timescales.

Part III - website, signposting and mobile wayfinding

Introduction

Wat Tyler Country Park understand the importance of signage and a website but currently have little funding put aside for this purpose. This may be due - in part - to a reluctance by the Heritage Lottery Fund for their support to be used on marketing activities.

They are, however, keen to provide a good website and mobile wayfinding project - encouraged by the success of the demonstrator project at Davy Down. This project, indeed, has encouraged support from a wide range of advocates - from representatives of EEDA to David Miliband.

Signage does have provision in the Wat Tyler Country Park budget - but only within the boundaries of the park. It could be argued that this is all which is in their remit - signage outside the park should not be considered by the Park. But if not the park, then by who?

Purpose

Communication and branding outside the boundaries of the park are vitally important. While it is easy to think that the user experience of the park begins when driving (or - hopefully - walking or cycling) through the gates, the experience actually begins with first awareness and should last for as long as possible after the visit.

External signage serves not only a role in directing visitors - a role which is not currently fulfilled as successfully as it could be - but also in reinforcing the brand and encouraging curiosity. A strong identity outside the park will encourage casual passers-by to find out more.

The web and new technologies also provide perfect opportunities for making resources available to all users, regardless of access issues, time of day, or staff. Web and electronic technologies are almost infinitely scalable; within reason, the costs for serving 100 visitors are the same as for serving 100,000 visitors. Updates - while they have a cost in terms of human resources and time - are cheaper than carrying out a new printing run. The educational uses of the internet are also almost boundless - able to deal with classes of any size, to encourage interaction and available at the site or away from it.

Mobile wayfinding - using a PDA (personal digital assistant) with GPS (global positioning satellite) system to give information on a particular location in real time - is much more than a gimmick or proof of concept. As an enhancement to static signage it brings all the benefits of a website - instantly updatable, high content volume and engaging - without changing the physical environment. Electronic media also provides an ideal way to gather information about the visitors to the park - whether it's gathering demographic data as they hire or borrow equipment or visit the website or gathering information on the resources which are most popular.

Changes in the way people use the web - driven by changes in technology - have led experts to coin the phrase "web 2.0". This refers to user-generated content - allowing people to add articles, comments, photographs, video and more to websites. The role of a webmaster is rapidly moving away from content generation and towards content moderation. The Wat Tyler Country Park website - and mobile wayfinding project - are ideal outlets for user generated content. Visitors should be encouraged to write about their experiences at the park, to add photographs they have taken - which is an ideal way of keeping the site's photography up-to-date and reflecting the seasons - and to catalogue wildlife they see.

User generated content also has a large role to play in education. School groups will be producing written or visual material as a matter of course when visiting the park, and using this material to populate a website - and to encourage visits by other school groups - can be applied to all aspects of the park from cultural to heritage and wildlife.

Relationship to branding

A strong brand is integral to signage inside and outside the park, the website and the mobile wayfinding work. Consistency and coherence brings a feeling of professionalism and a

memorable user experience. Branding work needs to be carried out before any other design work is done - regardless of the success of further funding applications, all design used on the proposed signage within the park needs consistency and brand. Continuing this outside the park not only increases the perceived worth and interest of the park (after all, only the biggest and best visitor attractions brand the signs beyond their gates) but also strengthens the link to the District Council.

We should also remember that visitors from outside the region will be completely unfamiliar with the area and will need strong direction; giving them an easy visual point of reference - by this time they should be familiar with the brand - will help direct them to the park. A good experience of the park will reinforce brand values and encourage them to take a role as advocates.

A good example of extending the brand beyond the physical boundaries of a visitor attraction can be found in Cardiff Bay. The bay's branding appears not only on the website and associated publications:



But also on road signs well outside the city and within the boundaries:



While the logo may not be clear on road signs it does provide an instant visual tie and reinforces the brand. It becomes apparent that any sign, publication, website etc. carrying this logo is part of the Bay development. The logo becomes useful for international visitors and is far more recognisable and usable for drivers than words - especially in the case of bilingual Welsh road signs. Signs within the bay area itself also carry the brand:



Repeated use of the logo ties services and offerings together. In the case of Cardiff Bay, services which may not be directly provided by the Bay's owners - for example restaurants, museums and so on - are still branded. In relation to Wat Tyler Country Park, it would be sensible to co-brand the RSPB's offerings - using the brand awareness associated with the RSPB to support the Wat Tyler Country Park brand, and using the resources available to Wat Tyler Country Park to support the RSPB.

Funding and cost

Regional funding needs a regional benefit

In order to secure funding from regional sources, regional benefits need to be demonstrated. The work to be carried out by Wat Tyler Country Park - for which funding is already secured and timescales set - is very locally focussed and to ensure potential regional benefits are achieved needs branding and communication. There are already many regional benefits - not least as a demonstrator project and best practice example (potentially of an international standard).

Communicating the benefits of the park - by carrying out branding and online communications activities and extending signage beyond the boundaries of the park - will support the park regionally with the added advantage of improving the offering of Greengrid and incidentally increasing visitor numbers from further afield. Parallel to this, development of electronic wayfinding, further developing the Davy Down demonstrator project, as well as providing online educational resources in line with the Greengrid communications strategy will increase extra-regional visits and fulfill the aims of Greengrid while incidentally benefitting Wat Tyler Country Park (and the local economy).

Very little is currently being made of aspects of the project for which funding has already been made available and the use of communications and branding to extend their appeal. There is much to shout about; the sustainable development being planned and the skills and trade academies fulfill the needs of both the Regional Renaissance and Business Support (skills) core products from EEDA; RES goals one, two, four, five, seven and eight are addressed, at least in part, by the developments already funded. The extension to this work by Greengrid could arguably address the same goals to some extent; none of the facilities being built or

otherwise provided will achieve their aims without awareness, which the proposed work will build.

Corporate sponsorship

While funding from EEDA would be the best way to ensure the development of the mobile wayfinding work and website, corporate sponsorship would also be a route to consider. Hewlett Packard's support for mobile wayfinding work would be mutually beneficial - providing funding (or at the very least devices) for Wat Tyler Country Park, while promoting the uptake of new technologies for HP. Of course, other technology providers may also be willing to support the project.

Sponsorship by developers should not be ruled out either; pushing the new building as a prime example of sustainable development and a showcase for those developers who buy-in to the Greengrid aims may bring in investment from one or more developer. Consumers are more eco-aware and - at least at the higher end of the market - more willing to explore new technologies. These are the types of consumer most likely to visit Wat Tyler Country Park due to its green credentials, and also the consumers most likely to be targeted by certain developers, making this an ideal partnership.

Revenue generation

As explained in the branding section of this report, a strong brand can itself become a revenue stream. A visitor centre is very rarely seen without a shop; sales of Wat Tyler Country Park branded t-shirts and novelties brings in revenue, extends brand reach and encourages brand loyalty. To all intents and purposes, customers are paying to carry an advert for your service - an ideal opportunity and one which should be exploited as fully as possible.

Driving users to the website and physical site

Branding and development of new technology will be nothing if people hear nothing about them. While signage serves some marketing role, it is more concerned with directing already aware visitors to the site. The new developments in themselves offer great opportunities for marketing which should not be overlooked. The PR opportunities offered by the Davy Down demonstrator project have been great - a visit by David Miliband among them - and similar can happen with the new development. Provision should be made in budgets and timescales for marketing and PR activities based around launches and innovations throughout the project.

The current trend for visual environment and homebuilding/renovation on television - with programmes such as Location Location and Grand Designs - may also be worth exploiting.

Conclusions

Work proposed by Greengrid should not be considered to be competing with the work planned by Wat Tyler Country Park. Instead, it aims to enhance their offering by providing branding, signage and technology which - although important and with huge potential - may not have been the core of the work to be done.

A brief should now be developed to carry out this work. The brief will consist of three parts - branding, signage and web and mobile technology development.

Branding and communications are perhaps the most important - and so far most overlooked - aspect of the work and should be carried out first. A brand identity and associated design guidelines need to be developed rapidly, before design work is carried out by Wat Tyler Country Park on internal signage in September 2007. Around £7-8,000 should be budgeted for this work.

Following this, signage provision and electronic communications can run concurrently. The website and mobile wayfinding work should result in a method of navigating the park in person using GPS-equipped mobile devices or virtually on the web; there should also be provision for users to upload content they generate, including photography and video, as well as providing electronic versions of the materials to be made available through the proposed museum/exhibition centre. Much of the brief for mobile wayfinding has already been put in

place by Greengrid in their application for EEDA funding and research carried out during the Davy Down demonstrator project.

Signage should be designed and put in place in the local area to aid navigation to the site. This should be carried out in conjunction with Basildon District Council.

Low budget and contingency planning options

Should funding bids be rejected, branding work should be carried out using some of the budget put aside for the planned web presence. While this will result in a scaled-down web presence - and lower ambitions for the brand - the importance of branding activity is such that this compromise must be made. A web presence can be built up further over time as more budget becomes available, but developing a brand for a product already established is much more difficult. A brand will also help encourage funding from other sources.

Signage could well be provided by Basildon District Council. An application for funding timed to coincide with the end of the financial year may be more successful than one made at the start of the financial year, especially for a capital project such as this. Leaving the application - should it be required - to this late stage will also allow for a brand to be developed first, reducing the amount of design needed and reducing budget.

Finally, corporate sponsorship of either Wat Tyler Country Park or Greengrid's provision of mobile wayfinding/sustainable development should be considered as a possible source of funding.