



SHREWSBURY BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Background

Shrewsbury BID was established in 2014 - the first BID to be established in Shropshire - and is in the third year of its first 5 year term. The BID strategy is to 'Mix the Old with the New', e.g. Tudor architecture, based on a strong and independent place identity.

Key priorities include: Business cost savings & support; Marketing impact; Access and car parking; Strategic direction & drive. Shrewsbury's distinctive history and heritage, its cultural and leisure offer make it a unique and appealing location to visit and stay, as well as a vibrant place in which to invest and work in.

Shrewsbury BID's approach to place branding

The BID organisation has a key role in raising the appreciation and profile of the town, interfacing with the social and 'community-ness' of the place. The BID seeks to provide and promote confidence in the town, including its history and heritage. It also has a key role in maintaining and improving the physical infrastructure, access and safety, and as a credible voice for business on strategic town centre issues.

The BID's approach to place branding and place-making is not spatial/territorial, or simply based on logos/straplines - the BID leads on Destination Marketing, PR & Promotion and provides a media coverage platform to better promote the town/BID area through its activities, e.g. website, newsletters, videos, promoting a strong sense of pride of place and collaborating with stakeholders and partners.

Activities include events/festivals (e.g. a high profile arts event planned for 2017), promoting and managing the night-time/evening economy, and gaining recognition for example in the ATCM Purple Flag award and British BID accreditation for quality management, governance and operations.

BID's use of heritage in place branding

Heritage is intrinsic, although not explicit, in the town's place brand. Heritage is, however, central to the character, history and environment of the town's offer and profile, as highlighted in its Business Plan. The BID uses local knowledge and area specific assets, such as listed buildings (660), museums, historic parks & gardens.

At Christmas, projections are made onto the museum & gallery at night, whilst the new town map and wayfinding incorporates key landmarks. £10m capital

funding for public spaces via the local council is being invested in cycling, wayfinding and on-street mapping. Notable heritage includes the Darwin legacy (an 'independent thinker') which is part of a strong historical legacy.

An exhibition is planned: 'Evolution' with public/street activities and engagement. Art is also used to promote the town centre, e.g. weekend art festival, art trails and art works.

Benefits of Shrewsbury BID's heritage/place branding

The town's heritage distinction is similar to comparators such as Bath or Chester. There is a clear value to authenticity, and buy-in by the public and journalists (e.g. tours of museums) through articles/reviews.

As well as measuring footfall, visitor numbers and spend, media coverage was estimated to be worth £387,000 in terms of editorial value in the first 2 years of the BID, including free radio advertising- contributing to a positive, upward trend and feel good factor. Other benefits include visitors/spending, events and investment, increased property values and an enhanced sense of pride amongst local people.

Challenges and Opportunities of using heritage in place branding

The Abbey, Cathedral and churches are part of the town's heritage assets and mix, but there is little direct involvement in the development of the place brand.

The challenge is to get heritage organisations involved, although they are not levy-payers. There is a need to encourage voluntary contributions from heritage organisations and building owners, e.g. joint promotion, marketing, events.



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