

APPENDIX 10

Newark Castle Marketing Plan

Section A – Situation Analysis

Understanding the context

Introduction to Newark Castle & Gardens

Newark Castle & Gardens are situated on the south east bank of the River Trent in the town of Newark-upon-Trent in Nottinghamshire. Newark is approximately 20km to the north east of the City of Nottingham. Newark Castle, together with the Trent Bridge, provides a dramatic, historic gateway to the town from the Great North Road, now the A6065.

Historically, Newark was centrally situated, being located on the convergence of the Fosseway, the Great North Road and the London North East Railway and became known as the 'Gateway to the North'. Today, Newark, which is situated on the East Coast Main Line, is now bypassed by the A1 which is adjacent to the eastern boundary of the town.

The earliest part of the remains of Newark Castle dates back to 1133 when Bishop Alexander of Lincoln had a new stone castle built on the site of an existing motte and bailey earthwork. Over the next 300 years the castle was extensively remodelled and it was substantially rebuilt towards the end of the 13th century.

The Castle Gardens were first laid out in commemoration of Queen Victoria's golden jubilee in 1887 and were extensively restored in 2000 with the assistance of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The gardens are relatively compact, covering an area of just under 1 hectare, and include grassed areas, shrub and flower beds, mature trees and a bandstand.

As well as the remains of Newark Castle, the Gardens also contain the Gilstrap Centre, an 1883 building which was Newark's first free library and now houses the Newark Tourist Information Centre, the 'Castle & Conflict' exhibition and other displays and exhibitions and public toilets.

Newark Castle stands overlooking the River Trent and the recent improvement to the riverside area of Newark, including the creation of Riverside Park, means that it is part of an area that has been successfully regenerated over the past 10 years.

Policy And Strategic Context

There is currently no District Council marketing plan or strategy, however the importance of parks and gardens to the District's environment and economy is recognised in a number of Council strategies and plans and strategies produced by other organisations, including:

- Making the Past Part of our Future - English Heritage Strategy (2005 – 2010) – this strategy highlights the vast increase in the number of people who care about the historic environment and contains 6 strategic aims underpinned by

a number of priorities. Those of relevance to Newark Castle & Gardens include: provide support and guidance to other organisations engaged in the care, study and promotion of the historic environment; increase public awareness of the historic environment; and broaden access to the historic environment.

- Tourism Strategy for the East Midlands (EMDA, 2003) – this regional strategy highlights the importance of tourism to the economy of the East Midlands. The strategy highlights the region’s historic treasures as a major visitor attraction and an aim of the strategy is to combine the visitor potential of the region’s many fine market towns (including Newark) by highlighting their outstanding historical, commercial and cultural attractions.
- Regional Economic Strategy (EMDA, 2003) – contains priorities and objectives relating to tourism, culture, sport and rural development including an objective to encourage tourist attractions to share best practise, develop support activities and create an infrastructure for the benefit of all
- Newark & Sherwood Community Plan (Newark & Sherwood Partnership, 2003) – the District’s Community Plan includes a range of priorities and actions relating to culture, economic regeneration, the environment and health. Those that link with the marketing of Newark Castle & Gardens include: to integrate cultural activity into the wider regeneration and enhancement of town centres; to promote tourism in all areas; to encourage the promotion of historic sites within the district for the purpose of tourism; and to establish a ‘marketing Newark & Sherwood ‘ group and publish a report and recommendations.
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (NSDC, 2000) – this document contains a range of objectives and recommendations aimed at increasing access to the District Council’s parks and open spaces. A specific recommendation is ‘that the potential of the Newark Castle Gardens and Newark Riverside Park complex as a significant visitor attraction be recognised’ and that a marketing plan for this area should be produced
- Newark Castle Gardens Management Plan (NSDC, 2004) – the site’s management plan contains a number of aims and objectives that relate to marketing the site and increasing its accessibility. These include:
MA10 – to provide a varied programme of events which are in keeping with the scale and nature of the Gardens
MA12 – to ensure that, wherever possible, the castle & Gardens are a safe secure, clean and stimulating environment for visitors
MA17 – to ensure that the Castle & Gardens are marketed and promoted in a manner in keeping with their historic importance
MO10 & MO25 – ensure that visitors to the Castle & Gardens are presented with a welcoming site and are kept well informed during their visit
MO11 – seek to develop the role of the Gilstrap Centre and suitable castle rooms in providing additional information and facilities for visitors to the castle and gardens
MO23 – market and promote the Castle & Gardens. Seek to increase visitor numbers by 50% over the 10year life of the management plan

In order to ensure that Newark Castle & Gardens are marketed as effectively as possible it is essential that it is included in future plans and strategies.

Recommendation R1 – that the contribution of Newark Castle & Gardens to marketing and tourism within the District be fully recognised and included in any future marketing/tourism/green spaces strategies and/or business plans
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Current Marketing And Promotion

The authority currently uses a number of ways of marketing and promoting the site:

Press releases – for events and improvements
General leaflet giving information on the site's history and facilities
Gilstrap Heritage/Tourism Information Centre – displays and front line staff
Council newsletter – the authority newsletter that goes to every household in the district on a quarterly basis
Newark & Sherwood Official Guide
Advertising in a range of tourism and visitor attraction publications, including the Heart of England Tourism's 'The Heart' magazine
Events at the park, including summer band concerts and an annual outdoor Shakespeare performance
District Council web site and other relevant web sites, e.g. Green Flag
Through links with relevant organisations, including the Civic Trust, Friends of Newark Castle & Gardens and Newark Archaeological and Local History Society
Joint initiatives with other Council sections such as Museums and Heritage

Marketing of the site is resourced through the Castle Gardens budget which includes an element for advertising. In 2005/06 the budgetary provision for advertising was £1,210.

The effectiveness of current marketing is not properly monitored and assessed and, in order to ensure that the available budget is being used as efficiently as possible it is essential that such monitoring takes place.

Recommendation R2 – that a system be developed to allow for monitoring the effectiveness of current marketing techniques

Understanding Our Product

What Do We Offer?

The Newark Castle Gardens Management Plan 2004-2009 sets out the vision for the park as being “to ensure that Newark Castle and Gardens are managed and maintained in an imaginative, effective and sustainable way which reflects and protects their historic importance and which encourages their use for informal recreation, education and entertainment by the widest possible range of people”.

Newark Castle & Gardens offers a range of formal and informal recreation and cultural opportunities for a range of ages and abilities. These opportunities include:

Formal

- Tourism Information Centre
- 'Castle & Conflict' interpretative display
- Display and exhibition room
- Interpretation boards
- Picnic areas and benches

Informal

- Footpaths
- Castle walls and interior spaces
- Riverside setting and views
- Historic plantings

Ancillary facilities

- Toilets
- Bandstand

Events / activities

- Summer band concerts
- Annual outdoor Shakespeare performance
- Cultural activities e.g. Ruskin 'Big Draw', heritage open days
- Guided tours
- Halloween lantern procession
- Photographic competitions

Newark Castle & Gardens are also used as a venue for events and activities by a number of local organisations including:

Magnus School
Local dramatic societies
Local dance and music groups

SWOT Analysis of Newark Castle & Gardens

Strengths

Catchment area of over 500,000 people within 40mins drive/30km of the site
Immediate catchment area of c30,000 people within walking/cycling distance
Good road and public transport links
Position within a cluster of visitor attractions allowing it to benefit from those accustomed to visiting this part of Nottinghamshire
Range of facilities
Guided tours of Castle's interior spaces
Interesting cultural and historic background
Close links with the local community and use by a wide range of community groups
Links with local civil war heritage
On-site staff, including full-time Castle & Parks Ranger, heritage centre staff and volunteers
Strong involvement from 'Friends' volunteer group and other special interest groups

Weaknesses

Lack of general access to Castle's interior spaces
Lack of on-site parking
Lack of on-site refreshment facilities (although nearby)

Opportunities

Starting point for planned heritage trails
Additional dungeon top be opened up to the public
Friends group is keen to further improve and promote the site
Well positioned to link with future joint heritage/cultural initiatives

Threats

Problems due to the ancient fabric of the Castle

Understanding our customers

Current and Future Visitor Numbers

Although visitor numbers to the Castle Grounds are not recorded statistics were formerly available (by an electronic counter) for the Gilstrap Heritage Centre, and these are set out as follows:

<u>Year Ending</u>	<u>Number of Visitors</u>
March 1995	112,955
March 1996	98,053
March 1997	95,057
March 1998	96,548
April - June 1998	31,369

The Gilstrap Heritage Centre contains a 'Castle & Conflict' exhibition providing visitors and school parties with interpretation/historical information on Newark Castle through the ages. It is reasonable to assume that visitors to the Heritage Centre will also visit the Castle and Gardens. It is also a reasonable assumption that many more people visit the Castle Grounds without actually visiting the Gilstrap Heritage Centre and therefore the statistics available are very much a conservative estimate of total usage.

A survey of visitors to the Castle and Gardens was conducted in the summer of 1996, with face-to-face interviews being conducted with 176 people. The majority of those interviewed lived within a 50 mile radius of Newark, however only 20% were from Newark itself, reflecting the regional significance of the gardens.

The Heart of England Tourist Board Strategy, published in 1998, highlights the growth in visitor numbers to the region over the last 5 years. Domestic visits have grown by 30%, short holidays and business trips have seen significant growth and overseas visits have grown by 23%.

The strategy forecasts further growth over the period to 2003, with domestic trips increasing by over 20% to 21 million, overseas trips increasing by over 40% to 3.5 million and day visits increasing by over 15% to 166 million.

The recent major improvements will put Newark Castle and Gardens in an ideal position to benefit from increased visits to the area and it is thus highly likely that visitor numbers to the Castle will continue to increase for the foreseeable future.

The overall improvements to Newark's riverside area, including a new park and marina, will also lead to an increase in day visitors to the area, many of whom will include the Castle and Gardens in their itinerary.

Recommendation R3 – that an electronic counter be reinstalled in the Gilstrap Heritage Centre

Visitor Numbers and Types

Whilst it is not possible to count visitors using the Castle and Gardens, figures have been available for those passing through the Gilstrap Heritage Centre. Between 1994 and 1998 these averaged 100,000 per annum. Given the longer opening hours of the Castle Gardens and the fact that many people using them on a casual basis may not enter the Gilstrap building it is likely that the Gardens are visited by at least 150,000 people each year.

Recent developments, including the major refurbishment, enhanced access to the Castle walls and rooms, the employment of a full time Castle and Parks Ranger and the creation of the neighbouring Riverside Park, have raised the profile and attraction of the Castle and Gardens and it is projected that visitor numbers will rise towards 200,000 per annum over the next 5 years.

The visitor survey carried out in the summer of 1996 found that:

- 87% of those surveyed were from within a 50 mile radius of Newark, but only 20% from Newark itself
- Only 14% visited the Castle and Gardens weekly or more often, with 57% visiting several times per year
- 15% were aged 0-14, 8% 15-24, 23% 25-44; 28% 45-64 and 26% 65 and over
- 50% stayed for longer than 30 minutes
- 67% had arrived by car, only 14% by foot or bicycle

In general the survey highlighted the fact that the Castle and Gardens are extensively used by those visiting Newark on a day trip, often for shopping. Typically these people arrive by car, spend less than an hour in the Gardens and visit Newark several times per year.

There is a pressing need to carry out further survey work to identify more up to date figures for visitor numbers and types.

Recommendation R4 – carry out an extensive user survey of visitors to the Castle & Gardens in spring/summer 2006
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There has also been very little survey work aimed at identifying why people do not visit Newark Castle & Gardens and it is essential that greater efforts are made to survey non-users of the site.

Recommendation R5 – carry out wider market research to establish a true picture of non-users

Socio Economic and Demographic Context

The historic market town of Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire, lies 24 miles north east of Nottingham and 17 miles south west of Lincoln and has excellent north-south road and rail links, being close to the A1 and the East Coast main line.

Newark itself has a population of 25,000 but a further 20,000 people live within a five mile radius of the town. In addition, given the amount of new houses which are planned to be built in the Newark area over the next five years, the population is expected to rise by a further 8,000 people.

The economy of the Newark area shows some positive points, such as a lower than average and falling employment and competitive land, labour and premises costs. However, there are many negative factors which are impacting on the economic prosperity of the area. These include: recent closures or reductions in the food, drinks, textiles and engineering industries; higher than average levels of employment amongst young people; pockets of high unemployment, and long term unemployment within certain wards of the Newark area; and an over reliance on traditional industries, and a low representation amongst growth sector industries.

The 1999 Condition of Nottinghamshire document produced by Nottinghamshire County Council provides a picture of the socio economic condition of the Newark area compared with 19 other areas within the County of Nottinghamshire. The Newark area ranks 16th out of 24 for poverty, 15th out of 20 for educational attainment, 15th out of 20 for the disabled in need, 15th out of 20 for children in need and 20th out of 24 for youth crime. Whilst many wards within the Newark area show better than average figures for deprivation, Devon Ward falls within the 10% most deprived wards in the country and Castle and Bridge Wards are amongst the 25% most deprived wards (based on DETR Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 which is derived from information relating to income, employment, health, disability, education, skills and training, housing and access to services).

The projected increase in population in the Newark area will be across all age ranges as follows:

0 - 14 years old – an increase of 31%

15 – 29 years – an increase of 13%

30 – 44 years – an increase of 22%

45 – 65 years – an increase of 41%

60 - 75 years – an increase of 22%

User profile – ethnic and social background

General 2001 Census data and more recent figures from Nottinghamshire County Council give the following demographic information for the Newark area.

- Unemployment rate 4.1%

- Households with no car 39.2%
- Ethnic communities 1.3%
- Lone parent households
- IMD rank (out of 8,414) Newark average 1,809 (Castle 2,156, Devon 470, Bridge 1,733, Magnus 2,876)
- Young people (under 16) 19.8%
- Women 20,363
- Disabled (persons with a limiting long term illness) 13.7%

Understanding our competition

Where else do our customers go?

Newark Castle & Gardens are located in an area that contains a number of regionally and nationally recognised visitor attractions that currently attract over 3million visitors per annum. Sites that are within a 20km radius include:

Lincoln Castle
 Lincoln Cathedral
 Southwell Minster and Workhouse
 Belvoir Castle
 Belton House & Woods (National Trust)
 Center Parcs Sherwood Forest
 Rufford Country Park (Nottinghamshire County Council)
 Sherwood Forest Country Park (Nottinghamshire County Council)

On a more local level there are a number of parks and gardens in the Newark area that will attract people who also visit the Castle & Gardens. These include:

Beaumont Gardens
 Sherwood Avenue Park
 Sconce & Devon Parks
 Beacon Hill Conservation Park
 Friary Gardens

All of these sites, with the exception of Beacon Hill Conservation Park (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust) are managed by Newark & Sherwood District Council.

The existing visitor survey form used at Newark Castle & Gardens does not contain a question about which, if any, other sites people regularly visit and this could usefully be added.

Recommendation R6 – amend the site-specific questionnaire to allow for information about visitors' use of other sites to be analysed

What do our competitors offer?

The sites that Newark Castle & Gardens competes with offer a range of visitor experiences, from formal houses and designed gardens to more natural environments. Many of these sites (Lincoln Castle & Cathedral, Belvoir Castle, Belton House, Center Parcs, Rufford, Sherwood Forest) attract people from all over the country and, in a hierarchy of provision, would be classed as both regional and national attractions.

Many of these sites offer a similar range of facilities as Newark Castle & Gardens (heritage centre with toilets, historic and cultural importance, interpretative trails,) and the opportunity exists to promote a themed link between the various historic attractions in the area (see Section B).

Target audiences

For the authority to be effective in its future marketing it is important to consider the potential target audiences and how these could be defined. It is possible to consider segmentation of the site and its facilities or experiences, for example:

- Events
- Heritage centre
- Historic and cultural interest
- Informal recreation

Facility specific marketing could then be produced in relation to each of these areas. This currently happens in part through the events and activities leaflet but the wider park and its facilities are reliant on inclusion in other marketing material.

Who are the audiences?

The people who are to be the target of the marketing also needs to be considered, they include:

- Non users – the situation analysis sets out the gap in understanding of who these people are and more research would be needed to accurately define this group so that marketing could be accurately targeted
- Current users – whilst many people are already using the site there is potential to increase the frequency with which people visit
- Elected members – awareness raising at a political level will be key to sustaining investment in the park in the future. Without such investment the management plan cannot be realised and the quality of the site will not increase

Site Positioning

To market the Castle & Gardens on a wide scale the “unique selling point’ (USP) needs to be looked into. Whilst this plan has earlier pointed out that there are a number of facilities / events that can be marketed in their own right with their own USP, wider promotion of the site in its own right needs its own message.

In the situation analysis the competing attractions were briefly examined and it was found that the main competition comes largely from historic houses and churches and country parks within a 20minute drive. Newark Castle and Gardens perform a number of different functions – as an urban park within walking distance or a short drive for many residents of Newark, Balderton and surrounding villages and also as a venue for events and day visits for the wider district of Newark & Sherwood and neighbouring local authority areas. The Castle & Gardens also form part of the overall attraction of the market town of Newark-upon-Trent and coach parties visiting the town will generally call into the site.

The Castle & Gardens are unique in relation to competing attractions by being in the centre of an urban area, whereas many other historic attractions are some distance

away from centres of population. The site also offers a contrast between a medieval castle and a Victorian park. Suggested unique selling points could thus be:

Newark Castle & Gardens – 900 years of history on your doorstep

Newark Castle & Gardens – where medieval monarchs and Victorian splendour meet

Recommendation R7 – carry out further work on establishing a unique selling point for Newark Castle & Gardens and utilise this in all marketing of the site

Capacity Analysis

In setting out to attract more people to the park consideration needs to be given to the likely impact of this on the site itself and the surrounding areas. There are four key areas of the park that could be adversely affected by increasing visitor numbers:

1. Fabric of the site – the compact nature of the gardens and the ancient fabric of the Castle means that the site is susceptible to pressure from visitor numbers.
2. Ancillary facilities – the key facilities that would both assist in increasing numbers of users and length of stay are also those that might also be at capacity, mainly the toilets.
3. Infrastructure impacts – large scale events cause damage to the infrastructure of the site, sometimes attracting adverse publicity after the event. Expansion of the events programme would need to take into account the likely impact of this and what preventative measures could be put in place (e.g. temporary road / walkways).
4. Customer perceptions – a large influx of people may put off regular users, who value the peaceful nature of the park

Recommendation R8 – carry out an impact assessment of the potential for damage to be caused to the site by an increase in visitor numbers

Future Marketing

The authority needs to consider its approach to marketing the park based on the situation analysis set out above. There are a number of opportunities to publicise and promote the park including:

- Press releases
- Leaflets – site specific and events
- Web site – either council site or park specific site
- Front line staff – heritage centre staff, rangers and volunteers can play a role
- Fliers / posters
- Displays in the Gilstrap heritage centre
- Internal communications within the authority
- Articles in journals / technical press

- Advertisements in relevant publications such as Heart of England tourism magazine, Green Tourism and Heritage Guide and district and county visitor guides

All of the above methods are currently used to a greater or lesser extent, however the park does not have its own specific web site.

Recommendation R9 – a site-specific web site should be developed for Newark Castle & Gardens

The authority also needs to check the effectiveness of its current marketing by including a specific question about how people heard about the site / event in its user and events surveys. It should also ask about how people would prefer to receive information in the future and this information could be used to inform the decision about a parks specific web site.

Recommendation R10 – that new questions be included within regular user surveys

The lack of consultation and user surveys (see Recommendation R4) have meant that there is a lack of useful baseline data that can be used to carry out trend analysis.

Recommendation R11 – that user surveys should be conducted regularly and systematically and the number of people surveyed at events and activities be increased

The opportunity exists to link the Castle & Gardens with other similar attractions in the area by producing a themed marketing leaflet. Discussions should be held with the Heart of England Tourism Board to establish the feasibility of this approach.

Recommendation R12 – that the feasibility of producing marketing material that links Newark Castle & Gardens with similar sites of historic interest should be investigated

There is an also an opportunity to promote Newark's Civil War heritage in a more targeted and sustained manner and the Castle will be integral to such an approach. Planned projects such as the installation of a Civil War heritage trail through Newark and works to enhance the accessibility and interpretation of the nationally important Queen's Sconce Civil War earthwork will also be important to this strategy.

Recommendation R13 – that Newark Castle should be promoted as part of Newark's Civil War heritage

The Castle & Gardens are sited in close proximity to Riverside Park and the possibility exists to market and promote the 2 areas jointly. Riverside park has a complimentary range of facilities (children's play area, open grassed areas, refreshments kiosk, sensory garden) and together the two sites thus include attractions for all ages.

Recommendation R14 – that joint marketing initiatives for Newark Castle & Gardens and Riverside Park should be investigated

Quality Standards

In order to ensure that Newark Castle & Gardens continue to provide quality standards that are acceptable to visitors and that attract new visitors to the site it is important that independent quality assessments are carried out. The English Tourism Board offers a visitor attraction quality assurance service which includes castle, gardens and interpretation/visitor centres amongst its categories and obtaining the accreditation would combine with the annual Green Flag assessment to demonstrate the site's high standards.

Recommendation R15 – that the site should undergo an English Tourism Board 'Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service' assessment

Measuring Effectiveness

In order to measure the effectiveness of the marketing approach a number of benchmarks should be developed:

Quality perception change – by repeating the household survey or user survey the change in quality score can be measured over time

Overall satisfaction change – as above

Pedestrian and vehicle counters

Number of hits on the site's website

Retention of quality awards such as Green Flag

Recommendation R16 – the effectiveness of the marketing plan should be regularly monitored so that continuous improvement can be demonstrated

Action Plan

Rec'n Number	Recommendation	Timetable	Responsibility	Progress	Resource Implications
R1	That the contribution of Newark Castle & Gardens to marketing and tourism within the District be fully recognised and included in any future marketing/tourism/green spaces strategies and/or business plans	Ongoing	Parks and Amenities Manager Economic Regeneration Manager		Officer time only
R2	That a system be developed to allow for monitoring the effectiveness of current marketing techniques	2006/07	Parks and Amenities Manager		Officer time Printing costs
R3	That an electronic counter be reinstalled in the Gilstrap Heritage Centre	2006/07	Parks and Amenities Manager	Discuss with Economic Regeneration and Leisure & Culture	£500
R4	Carry out an extensive user survey of visitors to the Castle & Gardens in spring/summer 2006	2006/07	Parks Development Officer		Officer time initially
R5	Carry out wider market research to establish a true picture of non-users	2005 to 2008	Parks Development Officer	Discuss with Policy to see if questionnaire can be included with other Council mailshots	Officer time Printing & distribution costs
R6	Amend the site-specific questionnaire to allow for information about visitors' use of other sites to be analysed	2005/06	Parks and Amenities Manager		Officer time Printing costs
R7	Carry out further work on establishing a unique selling point for Newark Castle & Gardens and utilise this in all marketing of the site	2005/06	Parks and Amenities Manager		Officer time
R8	Carry out an impact assessment of the potential for damage to be caused to the site by an increase in visitor numbers	2006/07	Parks and Amenities Manager		Officer time

Rec'n Number	Recommendation	Timetable	Responsibility	Progress	Resource Implications
R9	A site-specific web site should be developed for Newark Castle & Gardens	2006/07	Parks and Amenities Manager	Discuss with Friends re grant application	Consultant's costs?
R10	That new questions be included within regular user surveys	2005/06	Parks Development Officer		Printing costs
R11	That user surveys should be conducted regularly and systematically and the number of people surveyed at events and activities be increased	2005/06 and ongoing	Parks Development Officer Countryside Ranger		Officer time
R12	That the feasibility of producing marketing material that links Newark Castle & Gardens with similar sites of historic interest should be investigated	2006/07	Parks and Amenities Manager		Officer time Printing costs
R13	That Newark Castle should be promoted as part of Newark's Civil War heritage	2006/07			
R14	That joint marketing initiatives for Newark Castle & Gardens and Riverside Park should be investigated	2006/07	Parks and Amenities Manager		Officer time Printing costs
R14	That the site should undergo an English Tourism Board 'Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service' assessment	2006/07	Parks and Amenities Manager		£460 fee plus officer time
R15	The effectiveness of the marketing plan should be regularly monitored so that continuous improvement can be demonstrated	Annually	Parks and Amenities Manager		Officer time