

# Discover Rutland



## COVID Recovery Marketing Plan



**Rutland**  
County Council



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# 1 Summary

The tourism industry has been one of the hardest hit through the COVID-19 pandemic and the Discover Rutland Management Committee [DRMC] believe we are in a good position to offer an ideal location for the UK Staycation market, being rural with a multitude of outdoor activities and local businesses engaged with offering a safe environment for customers.

The recovery campaign will tie into the target objectives from the 2020-2025 Tourism Strategy:

- 1. Stimulate and support the Rutland offer**
- 2. Recognise and attract Rutland's key audiences**
- 3. Ensure a Sustainable Future for Tourism in Rutland**

It is also important that the campaign considers what our partners are doing;

- **Rutland County Council [RCC]**
- **Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland Local Enterprise Partnership [GLRLEP]**
- **Visit England/Visit Britain [VB]**
- **Local Resilience Forum [LRF]**

The Campaign will consist of at least two tranches, the first running from October 2020 as an immediate effort to support businesses through winter with 'Reactive & Reassuring' marketing, in line with government advice. A second tranche will be considered in the new year so support Spring breaks, depending on the situation at that time, with the aim to activate a national focus when appropriate.

The objective of the campaign is to;

1. Raise the profile of Rutland as a quality rural destination; offering a safe and welcoming location amidst the evolving covid restrictions
2. Target our regional audience in the short term and London escapes long term
3. Encourage short breaks
4. Target specific markets through suggested itineraries

The key is for this campaign to be fluid and reactive to changes in government advice and restrictions, with the ability to adapt or pause messages if necessary. This will run alongside a full media masterplan provided by the appointed marketing expert.

The funding will also finance website improvements to support these objectives, and other opportunities that are deemed appropriate.

## 2 Campaign Objectives

1. Raise the profile of Rutland as a quality rural destination; offering a safe and welcoming location amidst the evolving covid restrictions
2. Target our regional audience and London escapes
3. Encourage short breaks
4. Target specific markets through suggested itineraries

The initial marketing will be '**reactive and reassurance**'. As government restrictions increased whilst this document was written, what is needed in the immediate term is to support the businesses that are open by reassuring consumers that they can still visit whilst following government guidelines.

Then subsequent marketing will include a '**recovery**' campaign at a time when it is appropriate to encourage people to travel to Rutland from further afield.

### 2.1 Destination Message

Rutland's marketing strapline is *The County of Good Taste* and has always strived to achieve a message of being a quality destination. It is more important than ever to reassure customers that businesses are going out of their way to implement safety procedures and been seen to be going 'above and beyond' the minimum requirements.

Businesses will be encouraged to utilise the VB free quality standard 'We're Good to Go' which is designed to provide a 'ring of confidence' for businesses, attractions and destinations as well as reassurance to local residents and visitors that clear processes are in place and that as a business you are good to go.

### 2.2 Audiences

The geographical segments the campaign will target are;

**Locals:** reassuring residents to support local businesses

**Our regional audience:** those within a 2 hour driving distance who would consider Rutland as a day trip distance, however are currently more likely to convert to a short break as they are more comfortable staying closer to home

**City dwellers:** those looking for a rural escape from London [at an appropriate time]

## 2.3 Short Breaks

Many tourism businesses in Rutland rely on the profits from the summer months to keep them afloat during winter. As many have not been able to operate fully, or at all, during summer 2020, there is a real concern over how they will endure over winter.

Whilst ensuring the area continues to attract a high amount of day trippers, this campaign will be aimed at encouraging people to extend their visit and therefore increasing the economic spend during winter and beyond.

## 2.4 Itineraries

The key thematic groups this campaign will target are;

- Holiday from home – reassuring locals to support local businesses
- Families/covid bubbles + multiple family groups when appropriate
- Couples seeking a rural retreat
- Dog friendly breaks

With thematic content (tying into GLRLEP campaign) focused on;

1. **Great Outdoors** – walking, cycling, watersports, nature
2. **The County of Good Taste** – the fabulous food and drink in the county
3. **Shop Local** – highlighting retailers particularly in the run up to Christmas
4. **Try Something New** – workshops and courses available
5. **Family Fun** – how to keep the kids entertained

## 3 COVID Appropriate Messages

All marketing will be reactive and reassuring as a way to encourage consumers to support tourism businesses, but also ready to adapt to changes in government advice by ceasing 'attract' marketing if another lockdown occurs, whilst maintaining 'awareness' marketing so Rutland is remembered.

Both verbal and visual messages need adapting for this campaign, with consumers nervous at seeing images of groups of people in close proximity due to social distancing restrictions.

Key messages which are trending since covid include;

- Outdoor spaces
- Rural locations
- Family time is important

- Quality is a key message
- Safe and secure (perception and experiences)
- Greater appreciation of sustainability / green agenda

## 4 Key Partners

It is important that Discover Rutland's recovery campaign is coordinated with the work being done by our key partners. All of the partners' recovery campaigns have been considered when writing this plan.

### 4.1 Rutland County Council

RCC launched a '**Welcome Back**' campaign in July 2020, in conjunction with the Town Councils, funded by the European Regional Development Fund [ERDF]. This was part of a bigger '**Open for Business**' campaign to encourage residents and visitors back to Rutland's towns following the Covid-19 lockdown and was created for public information, not business support.

It's aim was to support the safe reopening of Rutland's high streets, providing information on what changes to expect, along with details of each business' opening hours and the measures they are putting in place to ensure safe shopping.

There is a question mark over how to take this forward and discussions are happening (to which Discover Rutland is a part of) regarding evolving it into a wider Rutland online business directory.

### 4.2 Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland Local Enterprise Partnership

The GLRLEP, is running a Summer Autumn 2020 recovery campaign which launched in September. The campaign title and hook which flows through all the themes and content is **#WhereIWantToBe**

The themes they are focusing on through thematic content include;

1. **Little Explorers** (with the kids) – family fun / making memories / hand-me-downs (relive the childhood memories) / hidden gems / top things to do over the summer holidays / shows & theatres.
2. **Enjoy Outdoors** – enjoyable cycling routes / best walks you never knew about / frolic and fun / surf and swim.

3. **Try Something New** – make do and mend, art classes, cooking classes, floristry, foraging
4. **Planes, Trails & Adventures** - aviation heritage, tracing family history
5. **Events & Festivals** – theatre, live performances, outdoor shows, arts & culture
6. **Living History** – fall in love with historic houses and grand gardens, interesting characters, film locations, museums, literacy greats
7. **Taste Lincolnshire** – eat your way across Lincolnshire / take a little bit of Lincolnshire home / ale trail / spotlight on producers

### 4.3 Visit England / Visit Britain

Discover Rutland have been engaged with VB throughout lockdown and have frequently promoted their marketing messages to the membership database, including the **‘Know Before You Go’** and the **‘Good to Go’** Campaigns.

VB launched a new campaign on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020; **#EscapetheEveryday** This can be incorporated into the work being done through this recovery campaign, as an added hashtag.

### 4.4 Local Resilience Forum

The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland [LLR] LRF have developed a marketing strapline in an effort to localise the multitude of national messages, and are encouraging local businesses to be advocates; **It’s Down To Us** - #LLRItsDownToUs

## 5 Marketing Plan

With tourism businesses anxious about moving into the traditionally quiet time of winter, it is essential that ‘reactive & reassuring’ marketing commence immediately, with an initial focus on the three month period from October to December 2020. It is hoped increased ‘recovery’ marketing can commence in 2021 for Spring breaks, however this will need to be fluid as it is likely restriction may worsened through winter

With the fund separated into two financial years, an additional marketing plan will be considered with the remaining funds for a campaign running from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

### 5.1 PR & Journalism Expert

Before the pandemic, the DRMC had planned to apply for this 106 funding in order to grow the tourism team capacity and progress a more focused and active marketing strategy. As this has not been possible, it is essential that this campaign engages a marketing specialist to develop and deliver the promotion, working with the DRMC and evolving with the audiences moods and trends.

Local PR & Journalism specialist, Rural Roots, has a “See the Wood for the Trees” marketing package which includes:

- Full media masterplan [appendix A] to plan an integrated campaign strategy
- The running of regular campaigns (based on the above) to tell your story to the right people across traditional, digital and social media, including campaign, blog and social media content
- Bespoke media lists so that we are targeting relevant media outlets
- Additional coaching in areas you feel you need extra support, such as media relations or social media management
- All reactive PR opportunities or journalist requests relevant to DR
- Social media content creation but instead of it being Instagram led, it will be Facebook-focused and include support for the group and a #DiscoverRutlandHour on Twitter
- Support at events and with award applications, etc
- This equates to around one day’s work per week which will be flexible to allow for spikes in activity around events, etc.

## 6 Budget

With the allocated Section 106 funding being £28,000 for the period from now until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. This amount will be separated into three tranches covering two financial years. This, however, needs to be adaptable due to the uncertainty of if another lockdown will occur and when active marketing is appropriate.

Tranche one: October – December 2020

- £3,000 - PR & marketing expertise
- £1,000 - Photography
- £1,000 - Digital marketing activity
- £2,000 - Visitor guide subsidy for Autumn Winter 2020

Tranche two: January – March 2021 [if an active recovery campaign is appropriate]

- £3,000 - PR & marketing expertise
- £1,000 - Digital marketing activity
- £2,000 - Visitor guide subsidy for Spring Summer 2021

Which leaves £15,000 for tranche three commencing April 2021, which will be developed around the situation at the time, but with the ambition of it being a large national campaign. However if additional opportunities appear during tranche one or two, then tranche three money can be reallocated, or if marketing has to be decreased during tranche one or two, money can be reallocated to tranche three.

## **7 Measurability**

The DRMC are keen to show what can be achieved with this additional capacity, and will be monitoring activity through;

- Website statistics
- Facebook activity
- Instagram engagement
- Twitter activity
- E-newsletter signups
- Media Coverage