

**Tourism Destination Management Plan – Action Plan
Progress Update**

Final Decision-Maker	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Dawn Hudd - Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Laura Dickson - Visitor Economy & Events Development Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the progress made against the three year Action Plan relating to Maidstone Borough's Tourism Destination Management Plan.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the update of the 3 year action plan is noted.
2. That the Tourism Destination Management Plan is reviewed and updated and a one year rolling action plan is developed.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee	27 November 2018

Tourism Destination Management Plan – Action Plan Progress Update

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Tourism Destination Management Plan (DMP) was adopted by Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee in July 2015 and the accompanying three year Action Plan was endorsed by the Committee.
- 1.2 There are no dedicated DMP staff, as this is a plan for the whole borough and for all of the stakeholders to deliver.
- 1.3 Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) has always been committed to delivering a tourism development service for the borough and the DMP provides a tourism strategy that focusses and supports the day to day work of the Visitor Economy Development team.
- 1.4 The Visitor Economy Development team delivers the marketing of the borough as a destination for visitors, supporting and advising businesses and working in partnership with county, regional and national tourism organisations.
- 1.5 Update reports were presented to committee in February 2016, November 2016, September 2017, and in March 2018.
- 1.6 The DMP Board is chaired by an MBC officer and the Chair of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee is appointed to the Board. The Board consists of partners from within the tourism and visitor economy who review the progress action plan quarterly.

Update

- 1.7 The final 3 year DMP Action Plan Update can be found in Appendix 1.
- 1.8 MBC are in discussions with Visit Kent to carry out a review of the current Destination Management Plan. It is thought that the plan as a whole is still valid, with the same target markets with the potential for growth for Maidstone, but will require updated data figures. The Economic Impact of Tourism for Maidstone (Cambridge Model research) is due for release by Visit Kent within the next month.
- 1.9 The 3 year action plan has now been largely delivered. A few actions were no longer valid, had no budget to deliver, or may have superseded by other factors.
- 1.10 It is proposed that a new one year rolling action plan supporting the DMP will be produced. This will be done in consultation with Members and with tourism businesses through a series of workshops in January 2019. As tourism businesses are gearing up for Christmas and the Cambridge model

results are yet to be released, the timing of the workshops are aimed to fit with the industry, who share the delivery of the plan.

- 1.11 Our investor agreement with Visit Kent ensures Maidstone is well represented in marketing campaigns and projects throughout the year. We are on target to achieve the actions set out in the service level agreement. This includes participation for our businesses in a Discover England Fund (DEF) project, funded by Visit England, to develop a brand-new product to promote gardens and gourmet tourism in England to international visitors.
- 1.12 Supported by our businesses, a second year of participation in Tourism South East's Meet beyond London campaign has been agreed. This is aimed at top corporate clients for business tourism.
- 1.13 The Visit Maidstone website is currently been re-engineered to reflect the technology improvements available. It will have a fresh new look and improve the user experience. It is scheduled to launch in January 2019 and a demonstration will be given to Committee at the appropriate time.

DMP Budget

- 2.15 There is no dedicated DMP budget. Projects are funded through a combination of existing related budgets, funding from the Kent Business Rates Pool, collaboration with the sector and bids for funding to appropriate sources. The workshops will identify those actions that require funding support.
- 2.16 The annual tourism service marketing budget is also used to support the DMP work. The marketing budget is £31,000 and is dependent on a £15,000 income target for advertising revenue on the website and publications.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 That the Tourism Destination Plan is reviewed and updated and a new one year rolling action plan developed. **RECOMMENDED**
- 2.2 That the Tourism Destination Plan is not reviewed and updated and a new action plan is not developed. This would effectively decommission the Tourism Destination Management Plan.

This option is **NOT RECOMMENDED**

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

That Option 2.1 above is approved. The plan provides the strategic direction for the visitor economy. The plan is for all tourism stakeholders in the borough and provides a focus on those markets that have the potential for growth. It enables tourism businesses with their development plans by providing a local context.

A review of the plan will check the focus is correct, and take into account developments in tourism locally and nationally since 2015. It is essential to update the data figures when the Economic Impact of Tourism in Maidstone report is published December 2018.

4. RISK

4.1 Without a strategic plan, the potential to grow the visitor economy is reduced and may lead to disparate activity that is unconnected. The DMP has brought together Maidstone's tourism industry, working in partnership to ensure that Maidstone can increase the volume and value of an industry that is one of the few growth industries in the country. Without a plan that focuses on the growth markets, the volume and value of tourism may decline.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 None

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 A series of workshops with members and the tourism businesses and stakeholders will take place in the New Year as part of the review process. A PR campaign around the value MBC places on the visitor economy would be planned.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The DMP contributes to Priority 1 of the Strategic Plan – Keeping Maidstone and attractive place for all: Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Risk Management	The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.

	<p>Framework. [That consideration is shown in this report at 4]. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.</p>	
Financial	<p>There is no dedicated DMP budget. The action plan is delivered through a combination of existing related budgets, funding from the Kent Business Rates Pool, collaboration with the sector and bids for funding to appropriate sources.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>
Staffing	<p>There are no dedicated DMP staff. This project is being delivered by the Visitor Economy Development team</p>	<p>Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.</p>
Legal	<p>Each local authority has a statutory duty to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". The Tourism Destination Management Plan demonstrates compliance with that duty.</p>	<p>Keith Trowell (Team Leader Corporate Governance)</p>
Privacy and Data Protection	<p>None</p>	<p>[Legal Team]</p>
Equalities	<p>The equalities impact would be considered as part of individual projects as identified in the action plan.</p>	<p>Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>None</p>	<p>[Head of Service or Manager]</p>

Procurement	None	[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Maidstone DMP – Update Action Plan 2015-2018
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

DMP - [https://www.visitmaidstone.com/dbimsgs/Maidstone%20DMP%20-%20FINAL%20030915\(1\).pdf](https://www.visitmaidstone.com/dbimsgs/Maidstone%20DMP%20-%20FINAL%20030915(1).pdf)