

**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 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 report be noted

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee	6 March 2018

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 of the 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 the tourism strategy that focusses and supports the day to day work of the Visitor Economy Development team (formerly the Maidstone Culture and Leisure Marketing and Sales 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 The first update report was presented to committee in February 2016, a second in November 2016 and a third in September 2017.
- 1.6 The DMP Board is chaired by an MBC officer and Cllr David Pickett has been appointed to the DMP Board to represent Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee. The Board consists of partners from within the tourism and visitor economy who review the progress action plan quarterly.

Update

- 1.7 The full 3 year DMP Action Plan Update can be found in Appendix 1. The full 3 year DMP Action Plan Update can be found in Appendix 1.
- 1.8 Stakeholder engagement event 'Maidstone is Great', held on 20th November 2017. The morning consisted of a tourism team update and workshop presentations specifically geared to tourism businesses. This was followed by the official launch by the Mayor of the new Visitor Information desk at the museum. The afternoon consisted of presentations for the wider stakeholder group and over 50 people representing a variety of tourism businesses attended the event.
- 1.9 Development of the Visit Maidstone website to introduce a new polling tool to allow integration of Online Travel Agents (OTA) such as accommodation availability and online booking e.g. via Booking.com. Trip Advisor reviews have also integrated with the accommodation and attractions listings.

- 1.10 Re-design of the Visit Maidstone guide to provide sections covering town, North Downs and Weald and Medway valley. The guide is supported by advertising, with an extensive distribution campaign with 30,000 copies printed and a Take One Media campaign agreed. In addition local distribution is arranged to Maidstone's guest accommodation and attractions, with attendance at leaflet exchange fairs for the south east provide an additional outlet.
- 1.11 Participation at travel trade shows to increase awareness of Maidstone as a visitor destination. Over 4,000 group travel visitors including tour and coach operators attended Excursions at Alexandra Palace in January. Maidstone attractions Kentish Lady and Kent Life partner with Visit Maidstone to increase presence at these and other exhibitions such as Go Travel, and the South East England Group Visits Fair.
- 1.12 An new investor agreement with Visit Kent ensuring that Maidstone is well-represented in marketing campaigns and projects throughout the year.
- 1.13 Campaign partner in Tourism South East's Meet Beyond London campaign aimed at London's corporate market for business tourism. A familiarisation visit for top corporate clients has been arranged as a result of the campaign at Leeds Castle on the 9th March.
- 1.14 Participation at International Confex at Olympia on 28th February – 1st March. This is in partnership with Leeds Castle, Marriott Tudor Park Hotel and Mercure Maidstone Great Danes Hotel to promote Maidstone to the MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) market. The Kent Event Centre is also due to present at the show.

DMP Budget

- 1.15 There is no additional budget for the DMP 2017-18 or 2018-19. The annual tourism service marketing budget will be 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 report be noted.
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3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the report be noted. This is an information report with no recommendations or decisions
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4. RISK

- 4.1 None

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 None

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 None

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 Service or Manager]
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 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.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.
Financial	There is no DMP budget. The action plan is delivered through a combination of existing related budgets, funding from the Kent Business Rates Pool, collaboration	[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]

	with the sector and bids for funding to appropriate sources.	
Staffing	There are no dedicated DMP staff. This project is being delivered by the Visitor Economy Development team	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.
Legal	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.	Keith Trowell, Team Leader (Corporate Governance)
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no specific privacy or data protection issues to address.	Keith Trowell, Team Leader (Corporate Governance)
Equalities	None	[Policy & Information Manager]
Crime and Disorder	None	[Head of Service or Manager]
Procurement	None	[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]

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