DELIVERY OF THE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (DMP)

The DMP was developed over the first half of 2015 using a proven five stage process which involved extensive consultation with stakeholders and partner organisations. The DMP was adopted by Maidstone Borough Council in July 15 and was officially launched to the sector in September 15. It is a three year plan which incorporates an action plan to deliver the themes identified.

DMP Board

The Project Group which managed the development of the DMP will evolve into the DMP board, responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Plan. The DMP Board will meet quarterly to review progress. It may want to meet more frequently in the first 6 months, as it moves forward with early tasks.

The core DMP Board will comprise one Councillor and two officers from Maidstone Borough Council, a representative from Visit Kent and six industry representatives, chosen for their interests and expertise in the themes of the action plans – events, town and countryside.   Additional people will be co-opted as needed, for their specialist input. The role and composition of the DMP Group will be reviewed at year three to check it remains the best way to deliver the DMP.   The Council's Heritage, Culture and Leisure (HCL)Committee nominated Cllr David Picket to be their representative on the Board on 13 July 15.

The DMP Board will oversee delivery of the Action Plans. Early tasks will be to cost and prioritise the Action Plans and to identify a Lead Organisation for each Action. Some of the DMP actions will be driven forward by individual members of the Board but a number of themed working groups will be established to progress actions over the life of the DMP. This will build the engagement with different interests in the Borough and encourage ownership of the DMP and its delivery by all stakeholders.

Run Workshop sessions for tourism and other businesses and organisations involved in tourism to familiarise them with the Story and to help them think creatively about how they might use it to develop and differentiate their own offer, service or business and help to deliver the Action Plans.

Develop an Online Shared Story Toolkit for tourism stakeholders to use, comprising Story-inspired product development ideas plus downloadable marketing copy (tailored for use in different markets) and images based on the Shared Story – so that people in the place are "singing from the same song sheet".

Name	Organisation
Dawn Hudd (Chair)	MBC
Laura Dickson	MBC
Cllr David Pickett	MBC, HCL Committee
Natalie Moor	Hazlitt Theatre
Andy Davy	Maidstone Town Centre Management
Leonardo di Gagliano	Hilton Hotel
Kate Blacker	This Art of Mine
Glyn Charlton	Detling showground
Shane Guy	Leeds Castle
TBC	Visit Kent

Appendix A

Working Groups

Four Working Groups have been developed around the following themes:
Working Group 1 – River Access Improvement & River Experience
Working Group 2 – County Town
Working Group 3 – Events
Working Group 4 - The Countryside

The groups will be administered and chaired by MBC officers to provide continuity and to ensure that the Board receives regular and timely updates from the working groups and consistency in reporting against the action plan.

The working groups will be comprised of stakeholders with specific interest and skills in those areas and membership will be fluid to reflect the nature of the projects being worked on. There will be a maximum of two MBC Officers and two MBC Councillors on each working group to ensure that the groups are sector led and that external resources are maximised.

At the HCL meeting when the DMP was adopted members were keen that when necessary members from other Committees would be engaged in the working groups to ensure that necessary actions were undertaken i.e. improvements to shop fronts may require input from Planning.

Current membership is made up of nominated specialist MBC officers, HCL Committee members, those individuals that signed up to be involved at the launch event, key industry partners and others that have been involved in the development of the plan to date.

Appendix A

Working Group 1 – River Access Improvement & River Experience

Programme of enhancements and improvements to make the river more accessible and appealing to visitors: • signing and entrance points to the river from the town centre • footpath investment – signing to include distances to key points, accessibility for cyclists • investment in moorings • parking for river visitors
Focus on strengthening visitor hubs on the river: • Improve access, facilities, activities and interpretation • Explore opportunities for more camping cabins/pods (luxury camping huts – alternative to camping in the open) to enable long distance walking, canoeing etc Priority hubs : • Church of All Saints/amphitheatre • Cobtree by Kent Life • Lockmeadow
Create river-based events & activities that will appeal to visitors, animate the river, provide a reason to come today, contribute to extending the visitor day into the early evening. Opportunities could include – dragon boat racing, rowing events, festival of lights, regattas etc.
Build up marketing activity over time linking to countryside theme. Develop marketing collateral – maps, trails, leaflets.
Prioritise river management – litter, dredging, landscaping, lighting, policing, anti-social behaviour, mooring, illegal camping.
Develop Riverside Walking and Cycling Path from Allington to East Farleigh with connections to the wider Maidstone area. Potential to expand this up to Aylesford Bridge

Name	Organisation
Jason Taylor (Chair)	MBC
Fran Walllis	MBC
Ian Tucker	Maidstone United
Steve Law	Explore Kent
Cllr Gordon Newton	MBC – MBC HCL Committee
Cllr Dave Narghi	MBC
Claire Proctor	Downs Mail
Tony Monk	Streetlife
Nick Kennedy	Kentish lady
Brian Hegarty	Street Life
Neil Gunn	Environment Agency
Adrian Larkin	Allington Marina
Mark Smurthwaite	Medway River Users Association
	Rowing Club
	Kent County Council
Cllr Stephen Paine	MBC – P&R Committee

Working Group 2 – County Town

Develop local markets and fairs – food (including a farmer's market), arts & crafts etc:
- Review existing provision
- Develop and deliver new markets in different town centre locations and develop a calendar of markets throughout the year
- Use County Town Market Charter and history as part of the positioning for street markets
- Introduce street food
- Develop local market management plan – litter/cleaning, selection of stall traders, access

Use themed trails and quarters to help make the town more legible for visitors and encourage exploration:
- Identify trail themes and quarters
- Develop a programme of animation and interpretation including:
- Making use of green spaces
- Pavement trails/digital trails using app
- Distinctive lighting
- Mark the quarters e.g. with sculpture, distinctive street sign branding, lighting etc.

Shopfront improvements including:
- Shop front design and window displays (produce toolkit)
- Maintenance to frontages e.g. redecoration, brand signs

Strengthen town's association with the countryside through celebrating and promoting local food
- Encourage local restaurants to source local produce and promote it
- Explore potential for a new local produce centre

Agree a strategy for improved access by car and coach into the town centre and support with:
- Clear uncluttered road signing
- Signing to car parks/coach park
- Visitor orientation in the car/coach parks
- Pedestrian signing from car parks to the town centre and main attractions.

Review coach parking provision – volume, location and facilities – to reflect needs of international coach parTies for shopping, and take account of potential growth.

Improve welcome and visitor facilities at the rail stations:
- Welcome sign and town map on board
- Clear signing to drop-off/pick-up points

Longer term, a need to deliver new development at Maidstone East station to improve first impressions and provide additional welcome & visitor facilities.

Appendix A

Name	Organisation
Fran Walllis (Chair)	MBC
Lyn Palmer	MBC
Barbara Dunford	Kent Community events
Cllr Richard Ash	MBC
Neil Pattison	Jubilee
Mike Evans	MMF
Larry Williamson	MTCM
Ken Scott	MAAP/Town Team
Lloyd Wright	Fremlin Walk
Chris Seare	Kent Highways
Ilsa Butler	TCM
David Statham	South East Trains
Jayne Jones	House of Fraser
Cllr Denise Joy	MBC, P&R Committee
Cllr Stephen Paine	MBC, P&R Committee

Appendix A

Working Group 3 - Events

Create an Events Experts Group that brings together senior decision makers from the main venues & MBC to "join the dots" when it comes to planning & infrastructure, programming & marketing

Carry out an Audit & Gap Analysis – looking at infrastructure & resources (physical & people), including venue capacities, transport links, traffic management, parking, signing, policing & crowd management. Must take into account potential negative impact on local communities & environment. Should include analysis of processes (licensing, highways, planning etc) too. Gap Analysis will then identify if new infrastructure/processes needed - & specific actions should then be developed.

Develop an Event Organisers' Toolkit – to make it easier to hold an event in the borough.

Set up a "No Clash Diary" – for venues to enter information on provisional as well as firm bookings. This is an "internal" tool for venues, organisers, accommodation providers and public agencies within the Borough (and neighbouring areas) to use – to help them avoid clashes, to spread events across the year, and also facilitate identification of potential "clusters" for joint development & marketing (see next action).

Develop themed seasons/festivals, inspired by the Shared Story and by major events. May need a DMP Group sub-group – an "Events Development Taskforce". Members of the Taskforce to be selected for their specific skills (marketing, events management, programming, fundraising).

Develop a consumer-facing "*Events for Visitors* Calendar" – comprising an online realtime database of confirmed events for consumer marketing (website content, emarketing, social media & traditional media relations work), linked to the Culture Kent data pool. Evolution of current online events calendar on Visit Maidstone.   Related to "No Clash Diary" – but serves different purpose. Drives events information on Visit Maidstone & Visit Kent websites, but also for tourism industry's own marketing (could incorporate a "widget" for tourism providers to use on their own websites, providing a live feed). Will need to be promoted to visitor-facing businesses as well as consumers. Needs tight criteria & market focus so only features events with clear visitor-appeal, and presents them in a way that motivates visits (e.g. clustering them, using Shared Story themes etc).

Name	Organisation
Laura Dickson (Chair)	MBC
Jason Taylor	MBC
Sam Bromley	Leeds Castle
Jo Hage /Sarah Macdonald	Rise communications
Lucy Hegaty	Kent Showground
Barbara Dunford	Kent community Events
Larry Williamson	MTCM
Cllr David Pickett	MBC, HCL Committee
Ed Martin	Produced in Kent
Cllr Dave Narghi	MBC, P&R Committee
Neil Pattison	Jubilee
Jamie Freeman	Headcorn Aerodrome
Luke Bentall	Social Festival
Tracy Brunt	KCC
Cllr Martin Round	MBC, P&R Committee

Appendix A

Working Group 4 - The Countryside

Product audit – map & gap current provision of trails, walks and countryside & river experiences.

Marketing audit – understand who currently markets the countryside experiences, where and how. Find best digital solution to make sure that online information for visitors from various sources is easily found. Consider how best to use/work with existing brands and sub-brands e.g. Garden of England, Heart of Kent, Our Land .

Develop themed experiences and trails that use Shared Story for inspiration, include key attractions, pubs etc along trail to drive more spend .

Develop marketing collateral – digital and offline. Rich online content.

Audit walks and trails selected for promotion to visitors to ensure they are easy to use and attractive – safe and easy to find car parks at start points, good facilities along the way, e.g. picnic sites, interpretation, benches, viewpoints etc. Ensure the routes are consistently signed and that refreshment stops and attractions along the route provide appropriate facilities for walkers and cyclists, e.g. cycle lock ups . Develop a plan for investment to plug gaps in provision.

Develop rural Visitor Information Points – "i" branded.

Work towards becoming **Kent's first "Walker Friendly"** destination using the Cyclist Welcome and Walkers Welcome
- Identify key towns/villages and support Walkers Welcome accreditation (prioritise villages with direct train links into Maidstone)
- Promotional activity

Name	Organisation
Christine Dier (Chair)	MBC
Abi Lewis	MBC
Cllr Peter Spearink	Staplehurst Parish Council
Jo Hage / Sarah Macdonald	Rise Communications
Steve Law	Explore Kent
Ed Martin	Produced in Kent
Yvonne Stark	
Victora Rose or Julian Barnes	Biddenden vineyards
Jamie Freeman	Headcorn Aerodrome
Nick Johanssen	Kent Downs AONB
Joe Gluck	Kent Wildlife Trust
Valerie Woollven	Tithe Barn Lenham
Cllr Gordon Newton	MBC, HCL Committee
Cllr Richard Ash	MBC, HCL Committee
Cllr John Perry	MBC, P&R Committee