



Porthcurno Beach in Cornwall

VisitEngland 

Principles for developing Destination Management Plans

Case Studies

As part of its support for destinations, VisitEngland promotes a set of principles for developing Destination Management Plans (DMPs)¹, which provide guidance on the purpose of DMPs and how best to develop them.

This set of short case studies has been prepared to add a further dimension to the Principles, showing the approach taken to different elements of DMP development by a variety of destinations.

Many of the destinations referred to here have completed their DMPs while others are in the process of doing so. Some of the documents referred to in these case studies are explicitly called DMPs, while others may be called strategies and action plans for the visitor economy or more specifically for tourism. The Principles recognise the relevance of all such documents that identify a strategic direction and set out actions related to the visitor economy.

The case studies reflect a variety of different approaches. It is important to appreciate that circumstances differ between destinations and what may be most appropriate in one place is not always right for another. The purpose is not to be prescriptive but to be illustrative – to show destinations what others have done and to help them think about what may work well for them.

The Principles document is in five sections, which have been used as the framework for presenting these cases studies:

1. Agreeing to plan together

Why do this and who to involve?

2. Gathering the evidence

How well are we doing now?

3. Setting the direction

Where do we want to get to?

4. Identifying the action

What do we need to do to get there?

5. Measuring progress and keeping it going

Have we got there yet?

Each case study has been selected on account of its relevance to one of these five stages, although there may be some overlap in the content covered.



Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland

¹ Destination Management is defined in the Principles as: 'A process of leading, influencing and co-ordinating the management of all aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience, taking account of the needs of visitors, local residents, businesses and the environment'. A Destination Management Plan is defined as: 'A shared statement of intent to manage a destination over a stated period of time, articulating the roles of the different stakeholders and identifying clear actions that they will take and the apportionment of resources'.

1

Agreeing to plan together



A coastal path from Port Quin to Port Isaac, North Cornwall

Destinations embarking on the preparation of DMPs do so for a variety of reasons. The Principles refer to the importance of having a DMP in addressing fragmentation between suppliers of the visitor experience, strengthening and co-ordinating key functions, managing tourism impacts, prioritising and allocating resources and winning more support.

Experience from destinations that have been involved in the process has shown the value of it in bringing different interests and functions together, both in the instigation and preparation of the DMP and in the ongoing management of the destination. Sometimes DMPs are undertaken prior to the establishment of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) and pave the way for them. Alternatively, already existing DMOs may be the instigators and overseers of the DMP.

A key concern for destinations is the recognition afforded to the visitor economy and the need to win support from key public and private sector bodies. The position of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) is a particular issue, as their support is seen as increasingly important. For this reason, many destinations are focussing their destination management planning on the delivery of growth and employment.

More widely, some destinations have illustrated how DMPs can be particularly valuable in bringing public, private and other community interests together in addressing the key social and environmental needs of an area alongside economic growth, through a more integrated management approach, using the unique opportunities presented by tourism for gaining economic value from a destination's natural, cultural and community assets.

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Dorset

coming together with the LEP across the county

Golden Cap, Charmouth, Dorset

The traditional ceremonial county of Dorset is fragmented and is administered by Dorset County Council and six Districts together with the two unitary authorities of Bournemouth and Poole. The Dorset LEP was set up to cover the whole of Dorset and so provides a unifying force across the area.

The opportunity that this presented to strengthen the co-ordination and promotion of Dorset as a destination was recognised. The approach has been to link the high quality coastal, countryside and urban resort offers and to heed the call from many tourism interests to really articulate and get behind the Dorset brand. However, there was a need for tourism stakeholders to commit to an agreed plan if this was to be achieved.

The LEP itself facilitated the initial move, with advice from VisitEngland, and provided funding for the preparation of a Dorset DMP. A Steering Group was established, chaired by one of the members of the LEP Board. This group is made up of two other LEP Board members, representatives of local private sector tourism associations, major visitor attractions, the local airport and cruise terminals, National Coastal Tourism Academy (Bournemouth University) and arts and food bodies.

There is also participation from key officers responsible for tourism from the local authorities, together with the Dorset AONB, Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and the county arts/culture team. The breadth of the Steering Group ensured that a wide set of issues were taken on board from the outset in developing the DMP.

A key task of the process was to identify the most effective structure for delivering the DMP, recognising resource constraints but requiring the commitment of local destination managers and other stakeholders, including the LEP. A formal partnership was needed, linked to a communication and engagement process that could achieve widespread support and deliver the Action Plan through the coordination of existing resources. By starting with the preparation of the DMP, this has helped in identifying a structure that is fit for purpose.

The Broads

planning together for sustainability

The Broads, in Norfolk and Suffolk, is the UK's premier wetland. The Broads has a status equivalent to a National Park and is an area of extremely high biodiversity value with a range of freshwater, tidal and estuarine habitats. It is also one of the leading areas in the UK for water-related recreation and tourism.

The first strategy and action plan for sustainable tourism in the Broads was adopted in 2006 and renewed five years later for the period 2011 – 2015. The Broads Authority instigated the process, motivated by a need to build consensus and support for balancing and linking its two statutory duties – conservation of the special environment of the Broads and promotion of public understanding and enjoyment. This had to be placed in the context of a mature tourism industry in the Broads, whose prosperity depends to a significant degree upon the quality of the environment, with many thousands of jobs depending on it. Having such a plan was also a requirement for the Broads to be awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, which was seen as a stimulant for building consensus and bringing the different parties together. The plan also needed to be in line with the Broads Plan, the statutory strategic management plan for the area.

The work was undertaken by a tourism consultancy which was commissioned to engage with a wide range of bodies including conservation organisations, arts/cultural bodies, navigation interests, anglers, landowners etc., besides the various components of the tourism sector. The use of a consultant from outside proved to be successful in gaining the confidence of these stakeholders, many of whom had significant issues with the Broads Authority.

Although started by the Broads Authority, ownership of the plan was taken by Broads Tourism early in the process. This organisation has a private sector chair and is principally composed of representatives of the tourism industry, but it also includes other interests and is supported by the Broads Authority. The result has been very successful in

achieving the consensus sought. Sustainability is at the heart of the strategy and it is wholly consistent with the aims of the Broads Authority, yet the tourism industry is extremely positive about it and the document is sometime referred to as 'our bible'. The whole process has transformed the attitude of local tourism business leaders and brought them together in a way that would not have seemed possible ten years previously.

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The Broads, River Bure, Norfolk



The Peak District and Derbyshire focussing on growth

Peveril Castle, Peak District

Visit Peak District and Derbyshire, the established DMO for the area, recognised the need to develop a DMP in order to provide an over-arching framework for sustainable tourism development, set out a strategic direction for the destination and prioritise action.

27,000 jobs in 2011

35,500 jobs by 2023

They initiated the process through consultation with a range of public and private sector tourism stakeholders. However, in light of ongoing cuts to local authority budgets, it became clear there was a danger that a plan would be produced which would not have sufficient resources behind it to enable it to be implemented.

There was a need to win support early on from the local LEP called D2N2, that covers the main part of the area. It was therefore decided to bring the DMP much closer to the Strategic Economic Plan for D2N2, with a clear focus on growth and jobs.

A tourism impact study was undertaken which looked closely at planned and potential investments. This was followed by the preparation of a Growth Strategy for the Visitor Economy 2014 – 2020. The latter, informed by the investment study, set a clear target to increase jobs supported by tourism from 27,000 in 2011 to 35,500 by 2023, as a contribution to the D2N2 overall target of 55,000 new jobs by 2023. Strategic aims to achieve this growth, while also generating wider benefits, were agreed by the DMO Board (made up of public and private sector members). This will be followed up in due course by the completion of the DMP which will set out specific actions.

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The English Riviera

providing a basis for industry collaboration

Up until 2010, tourism in the English Riviera had been solely managed by Torbay Council. The preparation of the strategy “Turning the Tide for Tourism in Torbay” 2010 – 2015 was seen as a highly necessary process for providing direction and a basis for collaboration.

Motivation was provided by a clear presentation of data showing the poor performance of Torbay in terms of visitor nights and spending in the previous five years in comparison with the rest of Devon. A key part of the strategy was a section on Tourism Management which reported significant tensions and sensitivities between public and private stakeholders and much fragmentation that was preventing the English Riviera from punching its weight regionally and nationally and was having a negative impact on the development of the resort.

Based on the findings of the strategy, the establishment of a new tourism company was recommended, to be charged with arresting the decline in visitor numbers and spend, increasing the value of tourism to the Torbay economy and repositioning the English Riviera as a leading and inspirational UK destination. The English Riviera Tourism Company was subsequently set up. By 2014 significant unification of the industry had been achieved, with over 300 tourism businesses and organisations working together like never before, with a fresh approach to tourism management secured through private/public partnership.

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Torquay, Devon

2

Gathering the evidence



Selfridges, Birmingham

The Principles for Developing DMPs underline that the latter must be evidence based. They point to various areas for which information is needed on both the supply and demand side.

Most DMPs present data on the performance of the visitor economy, the make-up of the product offer and the profile of visitors to the destination. Some go further, for example in providing a more detailed assessment of the local economy, business needs, community engagement and non-visitor perceptions. In many cases, evidence is gathered and presented specifically for the purposes of developing the DMP, including through the use of dedicated surveys. However, some destinations maintain ongoing research programmes providing data that can be used throughout the preparation and implementation of the DMP.

Gathering the evidence is not just about quantified data. Obtaining and weighing up opinion and feedback from a range of stakeholders is a key requirement and has been a feature in almost all DMP development. Indeed, the initial consultation process, prior to later engagement in agreeing on the plan, has proved very important in winning interest, so paving the way for future support.

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Birmingham

a comprehensive evidence base

Marketing Birmingham undertakes and coordinates a range of ongoing research that has fed into the Visitor Economy Strategy for Greater Birmingham. An important aspect of the approach is joint working and sharing intelligence between partners.

There are various elements of this, as follows:

- International and national data sets showing trends and performance relevant to Birmingham and the surrounding area. This includes not only tourism surveys such as GBTS and IPS, but also data from other organisations such as the International Congress and Convention Association and the Civil Aviation Authority
- Performance surveys of local businesses (accommodation occupancy, average room rate and revenue per available room, visitor numbers at attractions etc.). These are also used to feed a local economic impact model
- An annual survey of perceptions of the area as a place to visit, meet and do business. In addition there have been online surveys and panel groups on perceptions in key international markets

- A major visitor survey identifying visitor profiles, reason for visit, origin, transport and information used, activities, expenditure and satisfaction. On-street interviews were followed up by an online survey and in-depth telephone interviews to gather more detailed intelligence on motivations, perceptions and satisfaction
- Focused target market and competitor research, together with partners, for example the NEC and the ICC investigating the top international and UK association conferences and Birmingham's competitive position as a conference and event destination

Victoria Square, Birmingham

Shropshire Hills and Ludlow

business feedback and local consultation

Ironbridge Town, Shropshire

The Shropshire Hills AONB, together with Ludlow and a necklace of other small market towns in the area, is a high quality destination for rural tourism with a strong countryside, heritage and food offer.

The area's Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism 2011 – 16 involved interpreting market evidence from various sources, together with dedicated evidence gathering from a business survey and local consultation workshops.

An online survey was conducted amongst tourism business, including visitor-orientated food and retail enterprises as well as accommodation, attraction and activity operators. This enabled an objective input to be obtained from a cross-section of businesses at relatively low cost. Over 120 returns were received,

amounting to more than 30% of those contacted. Using two reminders proved very important in generating responses. A wide range of questions probed business trends and needs, perceptions of the market, barriers to investment (such as demand, capital, planning restrictions and labour/skills) and priorities for the destination. The results were very important in shaping the strategy and action plan.

A feature of the survey was a long list of pre-prompted potential priorities for the destination, with respondents asked to score them in terms of how important they were for their businesses and also how well they felt they were currently being met. Matters of key importance to businesses were found to include conserving the area's

landscapes and provision of visitor information, but here the destination was felt to be performing well. The size of the gap between 'importance' and 'performance' was used to identify priorities for greater attention – in this case the provision of basic facilities (car parks/toilets), attracting more visitors out of season and promoting public transport.

Workshops were held in five of the small towns across the area, each lasting around two hours. These enabled local community bodies and other interests to express their views. They included a presentation of the business survey to seek corroboration and reaction to the findings, together with facilitated working-group sessions to identify concerns, aspirations and ideas.

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Cornwall

including residents' attitudes amongst wider evidence

Penburch, Cornwall

Cornwall's Visitor Economy Strategy 2014 – 2020 has been based on a range of evidence from different reports.

These include the Visit Cornwall Visitor Survey, VisitEngland's Destination Brand Tracker, a Competitor Evidence report, a study on comparative funding of DMOs, the Cornwall Tourism Trends report and the Cornwall Council Tourism Review 2012/13, amongst others.

An additional piece of evidence was obtained from a survey of residents' attitudes to tourism in Cornwall, which is a topic not often assessed systematically by destinations. The survey was based on 1,100 face-to-face door-stopping interviews in different locations across Cornwall, with a sample designed to match the Cornwall population profile. Amongst various topics covered were:

- Opinions on the level of tourism at different times – need for more, too much to cope with etc.
- Aspects of Cornwall's assets that are particularly important to them as residents
- The impact of tourism on the area and on the individual
- Attitudes to encouraging further tourism development
- Priorities for spending on different services
- Whether residents are able to express their views on tourism, and are they listened to

The results showed significant majorities in favour of tourism in general, while also picking up clear matters of concern such as impact on the cost of living, litter and noise and some differences between different parts of Cornwall. It enabled the Strategy to make a strong play on the benefits of tourism, with a highlighted statement that:

"The importance of tourism is widely recognised by the resident population of Cornwall, with 89% of people agreeing with the statement that tourism is "good for the area", whereas only 4% stated it is "bad" for Cornwall. Similarly, 30% stated that tourism has a "positive impact" on their lives, with 13% saying it has a "negative effect" and 54% believing it has a "neutral" impact on their lives". This is reflected in the overall title of the Strategy – "A Place for Life – Tourism benefiting one and all".

3

Setting the direction



Strawberry Fields, Woolton, Liverpool

Based on the evidence gathered, the next stage is to develop the strategic approach and overall direction for tourism and the visitor economy to be reflected in the DMP. The VisitEngland Principles clarified the logical components of articulating a strategy, starting with a summary situation analysis, including policy positioning, and then setting out overarching aims, underlying principles, vision, priorities, objectives and targets.

The existing strategies and DMPs all contain aspects of the above but vary in the level of detail. Tourism growth, including spend and jobs, tends to dominate the overall aims and targets. Issues such as sustainability, inclusiveness and spread are sometimes identified within a set of principles. Many destinations set quite generic priorities and objectives, typically relating to: raising awareness of the destination (including brand development and promotion); the visitor experience (including product improvement and innovation, information and other visitor services); and stakeholder support and engagement. In some destinations however more specific priorities are identified, for example relating to seasonality, gap-filling, investment and management needs. In most cases reference is made to markets, (the desirability of which is underlined in the VisitEngland Principles) but this is not always tied into the strategy.

In some destinations the strategy is an integral part of the DMP and covers the same time period. There are however examples of separate visitor economy or tourism strategies which may cover a longer period (five or ten years) with action plans (sometimes called DMPs) prepared for shorter periods (maybe one to three years). Both approaches are effective provided the link between strategy and action is clear.

The actual process of agreeing the direction, priorities and objective is very important in itself in terms of arriving at a well balanced consensus and building commitment to the DMP. This has been well demonstrated in some destinations.



Durham

agreeing and delivering on strategic priorities

The Maze at Crook Hall and Gardens, Durham City

Visit County Durham is the organisation that coordinates the development of the visitor economy and manages and markets the destination.

Their approach is to coordinate and promote all aspects of tourism within the Durham brand. Previous tourism strategies were found to be lacking in direction, unrealistic, unsupported and insufficiently consumer focussed. A new Durham Tourism Management Plan was therefore developed, initially for 2007 – 11 and subsequently for 2012 – 16.

An important early stage was to build-up market intelligence, involving a major visitor survey, a segmentation exercise and a study of image and identity. This formed the basis for the TMP, providing guidance on visitor profiles and opinions and on product gaps and improvements needs, leading to an identification of product development priorities and target segments.

Initial consultation in 2007 was based on a number of forums across the county. This led eventually to the first

plan, which had 7 priorities and clearly identified ways of addressing them. The approach in 2011 was to carefully build on this rather than seeking to start again. A critical assessment was made of what had been achieved, including highlighting areas where too little had happened, such as in improving the public realm.

Consultation in 2011 was partly one-to-one, but also centred on a key event that brought together 85 major stakeholders, including the local authorities, main attractions, rural bodies etc. During this session a list of strategic issues were scored by the participants, using push-button voting equipment, leading to the identification of priorities. A further level of voting was also used to agree on the main ways of tackling each priority. The process confirmed the previous 7 priorities, added a new one (on rural tourism) and adjusted some of the delivery methods.



Vale of Durham, County Durham

The Tourism Management Plan has a simple vision which refers to sustainability themes – natural landscapes, internationally famous heritage, visitor experiences, recognition of the visitor economy, quality of life, and benefits across the county. This is followed by specific economic, spending and jobs targets. The brevity and clarity of these statements are their strength.

The eight priorities are strategic, but also specific and actionable:

1. Optimise the potential of Durham City to attract visitors to the county
2. Increase spend through a step change in the quality of visitor experience post arrival
3. Develop local distinctiveness – around the Durham destination brand and sub-brands
4. Tackle seasonality by focusing on events and business tourism
5. Grow the profile of the county by developing and marketing product with national resonance
6. Extend the stay by optimising the potential of market towns and town centres
7. Manage and maintain the public realm, taking account of the needs of visitors and residents

Increase the contribution of the rural areas to the overall value of the county visitor economy.

The remainder of the plan includes an identification of gaps and challenges in the visitor offer and a relatively short list of actions. All are clearly linked to the eight priorities through the use of reference numbers.

A key aspect of the plan is to set a direction for use by others. Local destination development plans have been prepared for five of the market towns, the coast and other rural areas, which identify a range of local activities that tie in with the county priorities expressed in the TMP. Crucially, the plan has been used as the basis for the tourism policies in the statutory County Durham Plan which will guide planning and development control decisions in the future.

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Liverpool

planning within a strategic vision

Liverpool City Region has previously adopted a three tier approach to setting a direction and taking action for the development of the visitor economy: an overarching strategy; a short term DMP; and a business plan for the DMO. The need for the latter to be kept separate is strongly underlined.

At the highest level, the mid to long term Visitor Economy Strategy was produced in 2009 looking towards and beyond 2020. Based on consultation, this encouraged blue sky thinking amongst industry partners to consider what could be achieved in the region based on its assets and potential and building on past success. It provides a vision and aspirations, highlighting key opportunities and the direction of travel.

The Destination Management Plan is identified as a 3-year action plan for growth and jobs to 2015. The document is logically sequenced, starting with strategic context, then outlining progress in the previous three years, opportunities and challenges for the forthcoming period, key requirements for accelerating growth, and a framework of actions. The DMP is referenced and linked to the Visitor Economy Strategy throughout, enabling strategic priorities to be identified for the four delivery areas: destination development/management; destination marketing; events; and conferences/business tourism.

This tiered approach has worked well and has enabled the shorter term DMP to focus on what is achievable at the time, while still reflecting the overall vision. In future however the overarching strategy and the DMP may be brought closer together.

Particular attention is paid to forecasting and targets informed by trends, but also by considering the impact of planned development. Presenting the time sequence of past annual results and future targets against 14 key performance indicators in one table has proved very helpful in illustrating what has and can be achieved. Many partners have commented on the value of this in informing their own position. The outlining of gaps, challenges and opportunities has also encouraged and enabled various stakeholders to identify and pursue their own relevant actions. In this way, simply setting out clearly the priorities and strategic directions is seen to be equally as important as presenting actual specific actions in DMPs.

Mersey Ferry, Liverpool

4

Identifying the action



Northern Quarter, Greater Manchester

The VisitEngland Principles provide guidance on the identification of actions which should relate to the strategic direction and priorities. A list is given of possible topics that it would be relevant for DMPs to cover. The Principles also point to the basic information that is needed, including timing, priority, responsible body and others to involve, and possibly an indication of resources and funding.

All current DMPs identify action areas or more specific actions. Sometimes these are clearly linked to the strategic objectives, but this is not always the case. There is considerable variation between the DMPs in the number of actions listed and in the level of detail and specificity. Opinion differs on what is most appropriate. Some destinations have favoured having a comprehensive programme that reflects the full range of needs and opportunities as a basis for annual selection and prioritisation. Others have found that too full a programme is off-putting and they underline the need to focus at the outset on a few, prioritised actions. This partly depends on how the DMP is used after it has been developed.

The types of action covered in the DMPs vary between more generic actions and specific initiatives. Some DMPs have included individual capital development projects, either as concepts or at a more advanced stage, in their action plans.

VARIATIONS IN PRESENTING ACTIONS

The **DMP for Lincoln 2015 and beyond** contains a comprehensive table of actions under three functional priorities – managing, developing and selling. The table briefly summarises the current situation/challenge for each action as well as indicating the level of priority, lead and supporting agencies, anticipated targets/benefits, and by when the action will be taken. A separate column indicates funding status (funding agreed, source identified, funding being sought etc.). For many actions this column indicates that funding is not required – for example, they may be about improved coordination. Typically, actions may include

undertaking studies, implementation plans, improving infrastructure, encouraging investment and pursuing marketing campaigns. The plan was based on extensive consultation with local stakeholders and has proved to be well used by partners and stakeholders.

The **Milton Keynes DMP 2014** has been based on forums and consultation (both one-to-one and open on the destination website). It covers six themes (enhance the visitor experience; strengthen partnerships with local businesses; sport, arts, heritage and leisure; image enhancement and marketing; and education). The action plan refers to broad objectives (e.g. what to improve), under which specific actions are defined in terms of targets/outputs with a separate column on how they will be evaluated (outlining what will be measured). The final column sets out when each action will be reviewed. In this way, the plan is focussed on achieving results.

The **Greater Manchester DMP 2013/14** is a short term plan relating to the longer term Tourism Strategy. It has six priorities, reflecting the strategy: enhancing the image; promoting Manchester to national and international visitors; creating a leading conference and business destination; improving the welcome and provision of information to visitors; developing and enhancing the product; and improving the infrastructure. Under each priority a small number of objectives are identified to elucidate the approach and a short list of actions for 2013/14 is presented, simply showing the lead agency. This relatively open approach relies on the detail being followed up by the identified agencies. This is pursued through a quarterly meeting of the Visitor Economy Forum (with local authority, private sector and other representatives) which monitors the delivery of actions.

Cumbria

fitting actions to local needs and destination priorities

In Cumbria the Destination Management Plans, drawn up by Cumbria Tourism, are project-orientated documents covering a three year period. The 2014 – 16 DMP is the third such plan of its kind.

These plans sit under the Tourism Strategy for Cumbria 2008 – 18 and refer to it. This strategy is shaped around four priorities: conserving Cumbria's special landscapes; developing specific experiences (outdoor adventure, heritage, food, events); providing the basics (accommodation, public realm, customer services); and marketing – the means to an end.

The Cumbria approach to developing the DMP action plan is rather different to many other destinations. This partly involves a bottom up process of identifying a wide range of existing and potential projects across Cumbria. The projects are related broadly to the above priorities. Many are specific development or improvement projects for accommodation, attractions and activities. However, they also include infrastructure, events, interpretation, information and marketing initiatives. Owing to the large size and diverse nature of Cumbria, it has been important to take account of the needs and opportunities in different areas, such as Carlisle and Hadrian's Wall, the Eden Valley and the Western Lakes, and projects have been identified and grouped accordingly.

The process involves contacting all partners at the start of the DMP development process to gather information on existing and new projects and proposals, which are then filtered and identified in the action plan. The stage of the project (early feasibility; developed design; implementation) is indicated, together with the lead agency, partners and cost where known. The projects are assessed through the application of a number of criteria: strategic fit; contribution to specific needs of the visitor economy; deliverability; evidence of need; benefits; value for money; sustainability; need for public support; and recording and evaluation. From this process, the 'top ten' projects are identified which are capable of having a transformational impact on the county's visitor economy and these are especially highlighted in the DMP, while the longer list of projects is also tabled in the document.

Increasingly, it is recognised that the DMP also needs to take a more strategic approach at a Cumbria level. Key

challenges and opportunities are identified from a local situation analysis and national trends. From this, ten key programmes to underpin the visitor economy are set out in the DMP. These include, for example: work on co-ordinating the arts, culture, food and drink; skills and business development; and strengthening sustainable transport connections. The programmes are not translated into specific actions at this stage but are open to further development during the period of the DMP. The programmes have been agreed at a meeting of the main partners of Cumbria Tourism.

The programmes and prioritised projects form the basis for winning support from a variety of agencies, including the LEP. It has been found that a number of organisations have used the process and resulting DMP in prioritising their corporate plans and initiatives. Examples include the Arts Council and the new LEADER programme for Cumbria.

Hadrian's Cycleway, Maryport, Cumbria

5

Measuring performance and keeping it going



Amble, Northumberland

Although this is presented as the final section of the DMP process it needs to be kept in mind throughout. The VisitEngland Principles refer to the need to secure support and funding for the actions and to have structures and processes to ensure that they are carried out. It is also important that the DMPs and related outputs and outcomes are reported on and communicated to visitor economy stakeholders and wider interests. Performance indicators and monitoring and measurement processes play an important part in keeping abreast of the state of the visitor economy. They are also important in assessing the results of the DMPs and in their future assessment, review and revision.

Most destinations have established mechanisms for taking forward their DMPs, although the extent of reporting and communication on them varies. All destinations are involved in some form of annual tracking of visitor volumes and spend and may use economic models to relate this to economic impact and employment. Many also use other supply and demand side indicators and monitoring, including product investment and performance/occupancy, indicators of quality, brand positioning etc. The main focus is on the overall state of the visitor economy in the destination. Most of the work on assessing specific aspects of the DMP relates to systematic recording of actions, outputs and outcomes rather than the use of more quantitative indicators.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON INDICATORS AND MONITORING

Various DMPs illustrate different aspects of the application of indicators and monitoring

The **Liverpool City Region DMP 3013** includes the following amongst its 14 performance targets for monitoring, in addition to volume, value and occupancy measurement: average room yield; retail footfall; ranking amongst most visited towns by international visitors; ranking by International Congress and Convention Association; passengers at John Lennon International Airport. The Visitor Economy Committee reviews destination key performance indicators every two months.

The **Northumberland DMP**, which is being renewed, will pay more attention to performance measurement than before. It will be monitored more closely and swiftly through the systematic and automated systems now available for receiving, analysing and reporting occupancy and visitor data, the results from consumer research and various online surveys, including calculations on return on investment.

The **Cornwall Visitor Economy Strategy 2014 – 20** bases its targets and future monitoring of jobs, earnings and productivity on figures for the Accommodation and Food Services Sectors as a proxy for the visitor economy. Monitoring these specific sectors has the advantage that up to date data for them are available and together they represent around 62% of the wider visitor economy in Cornwall.

The DMP for Cheshire and Warrington 2013 – 18 points to the need to monitor visitor satisfaction, business performance, off-peak visitation, length of stay and geographic spread. The challenge of funding monitoring is recognised. Evaluation requirements have been built into some of the specific actions supported under the DMP.



Durham

reporting on the plan and guiding its implementation

Durham Dales, County Durham

Visit County Durham is actively involved in monitoring the performance of the visitor economy and tracking and promoting the uptake and implementation of the Tourism Management Plan (TMP). The renewal of the TMP every four years is strongly informed by this process.

Trends in visits and spending and in the results of economic models of the visitor economy, have been monitored over a ten year period. However, the picture is also verified by tracking specific developments on the ground, including new jobs created (or lost), partly based on information supplied by planning departments.

The progress of the TMP is monitored and communicated through “where are we now” reports. More frequent and up-to-date communication on developments and activities is achieved through the use of the weekly e-newsletter the “Wednesday Grapevine” which is sent to a database of around one thousand stakeholders. A wide range of forums and association meetings, estimated at approximately 40 per year, are informed about TMP activities.

The Tourism Management Plan Committee has ongoing responsibility for the delivery of the plan. One aspect of their work is to provide comment on initiatives referred to them. These may include individual development projects proposed by private investors, local authorities or other bodies. The Committee considers how the project relates

to the TMP as well its overall merits, potential benefits and chances of success. This may result in the provision of advice, a letter of support or other assistance to the project.

Visit County Durham is particularly conscious that the key to leaving a lasting legacy in the county is the way the visitor economy is reflected in the actions of many different agencies, including those with statutory powers, in their planning, development and management work. The Tourism Management Plan plays a crucial role in delivering this legacy.

This document has been developed by VisitEngland.

VisitEngland is the country's national tourist board responsible for driving forward England's Strategic Framework for Tourism with industry partners. We work in partnership to lead the development of a thriving tourism industry, supporting our national and local partners to achieve economic growth and increase investment and employment by encouraging the development of excellent visitor experiences and effective business practices. For information on the wide range of support and opportunities we offer to the different sectors involved in England's visitor economy visit visitengland.org and for further information on England, visit visitengland.com

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