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## Destination Management Plan

To: **Cabinet – 12 September, 2013**

Main Portfolio Area: Tourism

By: **Louise Askew – Economic Development Officer**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

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**Summary:** **The report provides the completed Destination Management Plan for Cabinet to adopt.**

### **For Decision**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In 2012 VisitEngland bought out principles for developing Destination Management Plans and Thanet was the first authority in Kent to use these guidelines, to develop our own Destination Management Plan (DMP). The principles are a guide for organisations to gain more benefit for their area from the visitors it receives. It identifies the key stages and elements that should be in place – the people to involve, the evidence required, and the process of shaping and determining action. It recognises that all destinations are different and will need to interpret and adapt the processes outlined to their own circumstances.
- 1.2 The Council engaged Blue Sail and Visit Kent to deliver the development of the Plan, as a work stream of the Thanet Regeneration Board. Andy Brown, Planning Director South East for English Heritage chaired the Steering Group that included a number of stakeholders. Working in partnership with all the stakeholders the aim was to:
  - Bring external perspective
  - Bring new research and therefore new insight
  - Consult, analyse and filter the relevant responses
  - Value the distinctive of the place
  - Make a difference and add value
  - Achieve buy-in
- 1.3 The DMP is a plan for the place and not just the Council's delivery. It proposes priorities for the next five years, with activities that are aimed to help improve the visitor economy and encourage investment. It builds on current plans and activity and uses what is special about Thanet to help it stand out from the competition. The priorities are all market and quality led to ensure the right delivery and growth within the sector.
- 1.4 As part of this project, VisitKent has undertaken primary research to find out more about leisure visitors to Thanet including a survey of the views of 861 people who live, work and visit Thanet. They have undertaken a market segmentation profile of nearly 2,000 visitors to Thanet to find out more about people who are coming now and drawn on perceptions research of over 4,700 people to understand what they think about Kent as a destination. Also, through this work a new target audience was also identified based on market opportunities highlighted by VisitEngland. Currently the majority of Thanet's visitors come for the day, with most visiting in the summer. One third of the visitors are families with children, the rest are adult-only couples. The new

audience is identified as being young people – pre-families – living in London and least effected by the recession. They want to take ‘staycations’ and like to travel to places they have not been to before. This new audience will be interested in many of the assets already in the district; it is about getting the experiences and message right for them. They are ‘cultural consumers’.

- 1.5 The process of developing the DMP included a lot of work with the industry including site visits, conversations and workshops to develop the strategic view and headline priorities in understanding ‘our place’. Round the table planning sessions then took place to develop the actions along side the priority areas. The draft document was then consulted on, firstly with the steering group and key stakeholders and then the wider industry through presentation sessions.

## **2.0 The Destination Management Plan**

- 2.1 The DMP provides a Shared Story that is simple, distinctive and true that lays the foundations for getting people to work together. The shared story was developed through stakeholder consultation. It was developed to describe the place and provide something that everyone can use when talking about the area and promoting to visitors and investors. It aims to focus on future trends and future markets, to inform how we might need to do things differently. Through the consultation stakeholders identified both the positive and negative things that affect tourism in Thanet. These were used to ensure the shared story was based on a true picture of the area.

- 2.2 The three priority areas were identified with principal actions for delivery. The headline priorities are:
  - Beach Management and Development
  - Coastal Regeneration
  - Telling our Stories

- 2.3 Key activities have been identified for the three priority areas with a timeframe, identified partners and stakeholders, milestones, resources, outcomes and whether the activity is a priority and fits with the shared story.

- 2.4 To enable delivery we will need to establish new ways of working that is driven by a partnership between the industry and the public sector, where the Council acts as catalyst, facilitator and partner. This will recognise that collaboration across Thanet can build a critical mass of experiences and collaboration with East Kent more widely can open up further opportunities. There will be things that the Council (and partners) will need to tackle where they are barriers to making these things happen. To ensure the DMP is successful we will need to ensure that tourism is one of the drivers of the local economy and put steps in place to enable that, including supporting tourism business sustainability, growth and inward investment.

## **3.0 Corporate Implications**

### **3.1 Financial and VAT**

- 3.1.1 Resources within the Tourism Budget have been identified to support the leadership, facilitation and delivery of the partnership role of the DMP. This has been agreed by the Senior Management Team.
- 3.1.2 Each priority area and activities will have individual project plans developed by relevant stakeholders and individual resources will be sought where identified and required. This requires a new way of working through engagement of the industry and relevant mechanisms/opportunities will need to be developed jointly.

## 3.2 Legal

3.2.1 Legal advice will be sought where it is required for specific activities, for example in relation to the Habitats Regulation and the Beach Management Plan.

## 3.3 Corporate

3.3.1 The DMP supports the delivery of the below priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan 2012-2016:

- Priority 1 - support the growth of our economy and the number of people in work
- Priority 3 - support our community and voluntary organisations
- Priority 8 - support excellent and diverse cultural facilities and activities for our residents and visitors
- Priority 9 - support a broad range of sports, leisure and coastal activities
- Priority 10 - influence the work of other agencies to ensure the best outcomes for Thanet
- Priority 11 - protect and preserve our public open spaces

3.3.2 Tourism and the visitor economic is a priority in Thanet, recognised by the Corporate Plan and the emerging Economic Growth and Regeneration Strategy. The Economic Impact of Tourism in Thanet Report 2011 identified that there were a total of 3,128,000 visitors, creating a total economic impact of £230,373,000 and 5,477 jobs – highlighting its importance to the local area.

## 3.4 Equity and Equalities

3.4.1 The development of the DMP was carried out using the VisitEngland guidelines and principles. Where relevant, an EIA will be completed against the different priority activities and actions.

## 4.0 Recommendation(s)

4.1 Officers request that Cabinet adopted the Destination Management Plan, attached in Annex one and allow officers to take forward its delivery.

## 5.0 Decision Making Process

5.1 This is a policy framework decision and is a delivery mechanism as part of the Economic Growth and Regeneration Strategy.

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Reporting to:	<i>Madeline Homer, Director of Community Services</i>

## Annex List

Annex 1	Thanet Destination Management Plan
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## Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
<i>The Economic Impact of Tourism on the District of Thanet 2011</i>	<i>Tourism Department</i>

## Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	<i>Sarah Martin, responded 13 August, 2013</i>
Legal	<i>Harvey Patterson, awaiting</i>