

Meeting: Cabinet **Date:** 24th May 2022

Wards affected: All Wards

Report Title: English Riviera Destination Management Plan Review

When does the decision need to be implemented? 24th May 2022

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet's approval to launch public consultation on the reviewed English Riviera Destination Management Plan (DMP).
- 1.2 The new Destination Management Plan 2022-27 sets out the vision and objectives, markets for growth, destination development, management, delivery model and action plan to take the destination forward.
- 1.3 It's time to refresh and reposition the English Riviera as the UK's premier holiday resort of the future. Objectives for the life of the plan are:
 - **Recover** - return to 2019 spend and visitor levels by 2024
 - **Grow** - achieve an additional £75m of tourism spending and 1,500 new full-time jobs by 2027
 - **Re-balance** - more sustainable visits with 40% of visits from October to March (currently 35%).

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

We want Torbay to be the premier resort in the UK, with a vibrant arts and cultural offer for our residents and visitors to enjoy; where our built and natural environment is celebrated and where we play our part in addressing the climate change emergency.

We want thriving people; thriving economy; tackling climate change; Council fit for the future.

- 2.1 The proposals in this report help us to deliver this ambition by ensuring there is a planned approach to the recovery and growth of the visitor economy post Covid-19 and over the next five years.
- 2.2 The Destination Management Plan 2022-2027 sets out the interventions that can help propel the English Riviera forward. The Plan isn't everything that can and will happen but includes proposals which will shift the destination into a higher gear, that build on the inherent strengths and reflect market trends and opportunities and helps achieve a more sustainable and resilient destination.
- 2.3 The Plan will achieve its objectives by:
 - Attracting new and existing visitor markets and an improved reputation and profile for the destination
 - New product investment and development of the existing offer
 - Better destination management, visitor welcome (and resident satisfaction)
 - Clear delivery arrangements
- 2.4 The new DMP contains key actions and recommendations to achieve the vision and objectives.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1 That the draft English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2022-27, be approved for public consultation.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2022-27

Appendix 2: English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2022-27 Baseline Report (the evidence base)

Background Documents

None

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 TDA on behalf of Torbay Council commissioned a piece of work to review and update the English Riviera Destination Management Plan (2017-2021), creating a new plan with a clear, strategic way forward for the destination.
- 1.2 Following an open procurement process, including listing the contract opportunity on Supply Devon to attract local suppliers and gaining at least three quotes, Blue Sail Consulting were appointed in October 2021 (based in Bournemouth).
- 1.3 This piece of work is nearing completion, the new Destination Management Plan (2022-27) is a policy framework document that sits under the Torbay Economic Strategy and is adopting the same consultation process. The Evidence Base informing the development of the new Economic Strategy is indicating the importance and challenges facing tourism and the visitor economy. The new DMP will play a key role in delivering this element of the Economic Strategy.
- 1.4 The new five-year plan has been developed with support of a small Destination Management Group (DMG) steering group, stakeholders and business engagement.
- 1.5 Blue Sail's programme of work has taken place over three stages:

Task	Detail	Status	Date
Stage 1	Research, evidence reviewing, audit, market analysis etc.	Completed	Oct-Nov
Stage 2	Work included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DMG and strategic stakeholder's roundtable on 3rd Nov.• DMG/Stakeholders tel 1-2-1s.• Tourism business engagement workshop on 7th Dec.• Tourism business online survey circulated by English Riviera BID Company to all Levy payers.	Completed	Nov-Dec
Stage 3	Drafting the DMP: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft DMP received 21st Jan• DMG and TDA review/feedback.	Completed	Dec-Feb

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated amends to Blue Sail, 3 versions. • Finalised draft DMP to take forward to public consultation. 		
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1.6 The new Plan sets out the vision, objectives, growth markets, development priorities and action plan to take the action plan forward and is aligned to Torbay Council’s Corporate Plan, the ambition to be the UK’s premier destination, the ‘Torbay Story/Thinking Place’ work, the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark, culture and events.

1.7 The Vision Statement:

It is time to refresh and reposition the English Riviera as the UK’s premier holiday resort of the future. With a unique heritage, encompassing three towns, each offering a different coastal experience, set within an exceptional natural environment, the English Riviera is so much more than the sum of its parts.

Combining tradition and contemporary, we have a bright future. The English Riviera can offer the best of the seaside, outstanding seafood, exciting activities on and off the water, authentic cultural events and experiences, and a globally significant UNESCO Global Geopark designation that runs like a golden thread through the entire visitor experience.

1.8 The four key themes are:

- Food and Drink
- On the Water
- UNESCO Global Geopark
- Culture and Events

1.9 There are seven Destination Management priorities to take the Plan forward:

1) Brilliant Basics – those public services and open spaces (including beach management, street cleansing, signage, toilets, grounds maintenance, parking) which contribute to the visitor welcome, experience and overall satisfaction of the destination. Consideration is therefore needed for the management of these services to support the objectives of the plan and to grow the visitor economy all year round.

2) Visitor Accommodation – the management of accommodation change of use with Council planning policies is essential to avoid the risk and drift toward low quality visitor accommodation and negative consumer reviews. Efforts to identify alternative use and relevant new products complementing this plan should be taken forward.

3) Towns & Connectivity – public realm and regeneration improvements to continue to

further support tourism and the needs of the visitor.

4) Sustainable Tourism – the growing need to address climate change and consider measures that would have the greatest impact in reducing climate impact from tourism.

5) Skills – Making tourism an attractive carer choice for young people with exciting career pathways needs to start early with early 'Information, Advice and Guidance', is essential to growing the visitor economy.

6) Research & Insights – monitoring progress and views of visitors and businesses and explore brand identity impact.

7) Business Tourism - to rebuild and grow the opportunities for regional/national association conferences and events within a 50-mile radius, whilst strengthening links with venues and businesses.

- 1.10 Delivery and organisation – the Destination Management Group (DMG) has critical role to take the plan forward, bringing the different organisations together. It's recommended this structure continues, making the best use of resources and working collaboratively in partnership to deliver the plan's objectives.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 Continue with the existing plan but this is no longer appropriate and out of date.
- 2.1 Adopt the new plan as set out.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 The review of the policy will have no short-term financial implications, as it will be delivered as part of the contract fee paid by Torbay Council to TDA. Ultimately, it is expected that there will be both opportunities and implications. The Destination Management Plan and its action plan will also inform the Council's bidding priorities to UK Shared Prosperity Fund and other similar funding programmes.
- 3.2 Furthermore, the action plan is likely to require a refocus of existing resources and potentially require additional resources over and above that currently available for delivery. Where possible, other funding sources will be sought.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications with this proposal.

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 The input of many key stakeholders and businesses has taken place through the review including:

- Destination Management Group and strategic stakeholder's roundtable on 3rd November, led by Blue Sail Consulting, with 16 in attendance.
- Series of stakeholders one-to-one telephone/online consultations with Blue Sail.
- Tourism business engagement workshop on 7th December, led by Blue Sail Consulting, with 25 in attendance.
- Online tourism business survey circulated by the English Riviera BID Company to all ERBID levy payers (from 20th December 2021 to 7th January 2022). 156 businesses responded to the survey.

5.2 The feedback of engagement provided many useful insights which have helped shape the development of the new plan. Insights included:

- There is inconsistent quality across the visitor experience, including town centres and accommodation.
- An over-supply of accommodation is depressing prices and restricting investment. Current planning policies (TO2 Change of use of tourism accommodation and facilities) are helpful in addressing this but need to go further.
- Environmental and sustainable improvements, e.g. Electric Vehicle (EV) charging and improving nature in the towns, are important.
- Market awareness and appeal of the English Riviera brand, there is a recognition that it unites the destination, giving coherence and a focus for businesses.
- The UNESCO Global Geopark designation is important, but often underused and misunderstood.
- Tor Bay is a magnificent asset and the underlying quality of the award-winning beaches, harbour and marine and sea-based activities are excellent.
- Developing demand out of the main summer season is vital.
- Connectivity between the towns, and also with the rail stations, needs improving.

- New visitor markets demand a better range of food and drink, culture, retail, music and entertainment and see other destinations offering this.

5.3 The Council will hold a six-week public consultation from 24th May 2022.

5.4 Following the public consultation relevant feedback will be incorporated into the DMP as appropriate.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

6.1 TDA, on behalf of Torbay Council commissioned a piece of work to review and update the English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2017-2021, creating a new plan with a clear, strategic way forward for the destination.

6.2 Following an open procurement process, including listing the opportunity on Supply Devon to attract local suppliers and gaining at least three quotes, Blue Sail Consulting were appointed, who are based in Bournemouth.

6.3 The Destination Management Plan links to thriving economy, in particular the ambition to be the premier resort in the UK.

7. Tackling Climate Change

7.1 The new Destination Management Plan is aligned to and supports Torbay's carbon neutral ambitions. The DMP offers the opportunity to think about an approach and actions that will help move tourism and the English Riviera towards a goal of Net Zero.

7.3 Tourism faces some big challenges, not least how to develop sustainably and respond to the climate crisis, there is also the need to think about growth that is sustainable.

7.4 The priority themes to drive tourism growth set out in the plan are not everything that can or will happen. Rather they are the focus for development which is sustainable, pragmatic, deliverable and catalytic and which responds to the market opportunities identified for the destination in the plan.

8. Associated Risks

8.1 The adoption of the Destination Management Plan 2022-27 is fundamental in ensuring the Council can set the framework for developing Torbay's tourism economy, repositioning the English Riviera as the UK's premier holiday resort of the future.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	There is a skills priority focus and associated actions in the plan, to enable business engagement and promoting attractive career pathways in the sector.		
People with caring Responsibilities			No differential impact.
People with a disability	Tourism developments should be encouraged to be fully accessible.		
Women or men			No differential impact.
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)	Alignment with the report commissioned for the Economic Strategy.		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact.
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No differential impact.
People who are transgendered			No differential impact.
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact.
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No differential impact.
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	The plan seeks to create new job opportunities for residents that will improve the quality of		

	life for them and their families		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	Providing increased employment opportunities can take households from 'workless' to working. This can provide additional income for families to support a healthier lifestyle.		

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 None

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 None