

Meeting: Cabinet/Council **Date:** 30th August 2022/15th September 2022

Wards affected: All Wards

Report Title: English Riviera Destination Management Plan Review

When does the decision need to be implemented? 15th September 2022

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek the Council's approval of the English Riviera Destination Management Plan (DMP) following public consultation.
- 1.2 The new Destination Management Plan 2022-30 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.

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.
- 2.2 The Destination Management Plan 2022-2030 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 (targeted) and existing visitor markets and an improved reputation and profile for the destination
- New product investment and development of the existing offer, making the most of our natural and cultural assets
- Better destination management, visitor welcome (and resident satisfaction)
- Clear delivery arrangements through collaborative, partnership working

2.4 The DMP contains growth priorities and actions linked to destination development underpinning growth. These are the interventions that will see the destination shift into a higher gear. There are also a number of underpinning priorities and delivery tasks which will maintain competitiveness and ensure that delivery arrangements are realistic and fit for purpose.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

3.1 That the Cabinet recommends to Council that the Destination Management Plan be approved as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report; and

3.2 That subject to the above, Cabinet approves the actions set out in the Destination Management Plan (that form an 'action plan') and that implementation of the action plan be monitored and reviewed annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Appendices

Appendix 1: English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2022-2030

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

Background Documents

None

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 (DMP), 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.
- 1.3 The six weeks public consultation for the draft English Riviera Destination Management Plan is now complete and the draft plan has been revised (as appropriate) with the feedback received.
- 1.4 The new Destination Management Plan (2022-30) is a policy framework document that will sit under the new Torbay Economic Growth Strategy. The Evidence Base informing the development of the new Torbay Economic Growth Strategy details the importance and challenges facing tourism and the visitor economy. The new DMP will play a key role in delivering this element of the Torbay Economic Growth Strategy and is aligned to the Torbay Story.
- 1.5 The new DMP sets out the vision, objectives, growth markets, development priorities and action plan to take forward and is aligned to Torbay Council's Corporate Plan, the ambition to be the UK's premier destination, the Torbay Story, the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark, culture and events.

1.6 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.

1.7 The four target growth markets are:

- Fun by the sea families
- Young Actives
- Cultural Explorers
- Business Tourism and Events

1.8 The four key themes are:

- Food and Drink
- On and in 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 to 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 a 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. In line with the annual review, the DMG will receive updates on progress against the plan, reported through to the Divisional Director of Economy, and reviewed annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

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 has informed the Council's investment plan to the 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 six weeks public consultation for the draft English Riviera Destination Management Plan is now complete, taking place 24th May to 5th July. The consultation included the following activity to engage and encourage completion of the online survey:
- Local businesses – via TDA and English Riviera BID distribution lists.
 - Residents – via local press, Torbay Council channels (social media, e-newsletters, website etc), local Facebook groups.
 - Torbay public and community sector organisations – via email survey and asking them to share on their channels.

- Torbay Council, TDA and SWISCo staff – promoted the survey to staff via internal channels (e.g. Insight, Staff News (Torbay Council); SWISCo Staff News; TDA internal channels)
- Councillors – Sent survey link and information about the DMP to all elected councillors via the Members Briefing and ask them to complete and share with their own contacts.

5.2 The online survey ran from 24th May to 5th July on Torbay Council's consultation website page. 109 anonymous survey completions were received, and results show respondents are supportive of the plan and the direction of travel.

5.3 Top line analysis shows:

- 83% of respondents agree with the new vision statement (49% strongly agree, 34% agree)
- 84% agree with the draft plan's objectives (47% strongly agree, 37% agree)
- 70% of respondents agree with the target growth markets (28% strongly agree, 42% agree)
- 74% of respondents agree with the priority themes (35% strongly agree, 39% agree)
- 59% of respondents agree with the actions in the draft plan (17% strongly agree, 42% agree)

5.4 The survey also had two open/ free text questions asking if the draft plan had missed anything or if respondents had anything else they would like to add. This free text data has been analysed and identified the following key themes/ issues:

- Public safety concerns – Anti Social Behaviour (ASB), Castle Circus/ Factory Row, drug use, clean up the high streets, street crime.
- Retail offer – quality, quantity, empty shops, appearance, graffiti.
- 'Brilliant basics' related:
 - Parking - quality, cheaper
 - Beaches - accessibility, quality, upkeep, free parking
 - Towns upkeep, street cleaning, roads maintenance
 - Toilets – access, free
 - Transport links/ accessibility
- Town centre regeneration/Economic Strategy related - pace of projects, other sectors related comments, appearance of the high streets, Community Wealth Building related - opportunities for local businesses.
- Cultural offer – comments centred around promotions, product development, attracting new visitors.

- Sustainability – improvements needed in the plans’ content on green, low carbon opportunities for Torbay.
- Council events strategy – general support for more public events, good feedback for Music on the Meadows.

5.5 The DMP has been updated to address the points raised and edits have been made where it’s appropriate, some tweaking was needed to ensure the wording and language is clear. For example, with the cultural offer, this is identified in the Plan as a target growth market and development opportunity for the destination in the DMP. Suggestions for improvements on sustainability have been included in the final draft of the DMP.

5.6 It should be noted that not all the points raised are appropriate for the DMP to take forward, some of the issues raised are known and complex and the data has therefore been shared with relevant colleagues to address. E.g ASB. In addition, other feedback is more related to other strategies, again data has been shared.

5.7 Feedback from Council Overview and Scrutiny from 8th June meeting has been received, reviewed and actioned as follows:

| 7 Recommendations | Response/Action |
|--|--|
| To consider extending the period covered by the Destination Management Plan to 2030 to tie up with the Local Plan and Economic Strategy; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Completed |
| To revisit the number of priorities to ensure a more focussed and targeted approach reducing them from 28 actions and to identify quick wins which could be implemented within a few months e.g. better signage, heritage trails etc.; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Completed, actions have been reduced, and quick wins identified |
| To regularly monitor the action plans to ensure that proposals are implemented and reprioritised as appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual review has been set out in the action plan, a process, data dash board for reporting will be set up for DMP implementation (next stage of work). • DMG meetings will also be used to monitor progress. • Action: Review DMP wording so this is clear. |
| To continue working closely with South Devon College, schools and local businesses to encourage people into jobs and apprenticeships within the tourism sector in Torbay; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed - SDC are the lead partner for this work and in the DMP action plan. • This work is also a focus of the Economic Strategy. |

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|---|---|
| To ensure that the Destination Management Plan dovetails with the emerging revised Economic Strategy; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed. |
| To consider rewording the start of the document to put it in context with the trends which have evolved over a number of years; and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Completed. |
| To ensure better signage and connectivity within individual towns in addition to between the three towns. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Review the actions and wording. • Note – there are plans to update the brown signs around the three towns which will also improve connectivity. |

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, 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 2022-30 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. |

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|---|--|--|-------------------------|
| 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