

TOURISM ACTION PLAN 2016/17

Cabinet Member Cllr Richard Chesterton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration
Responsible Officer Amy Tregellas, Head of Communities and Governance

Reason for Report: To provide members with details of the Tourism Action Plan (Appendix A) for 2016/17.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Cabinet approves the Tourism Action Plan (Appendix A) for 2016/17

Relationship to Corporate Plan: A thriving economy is one of the Council's key corporate priorities within the Corporate Plan and tourism is a key strand of this

Financial Implications: Where appropriate external funding sources will be sought to deliver projects within this action plan. However, there will be some costs such as the market research but this will be funded from the Economic Development budget.

Legal Implications: No legal implications.

Risk Assessment: None

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides members with details of the work programme in terms of tourism for the 2016/17 financial year, which is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2 The Council's new Corporate Plan for 2016-2020 includes growing the tourism sector under the Economy priority and the public consultation, indicated that the public believe that tourism should be a key area of focus for the Council.
- 1.3 A priority of the action plan is to conduct market research to understand the economic impact Tourism has on Mid Devon and to identify our local offer and visitor profile in order to direct future marketing, initiatives and to identify targeted visitor groups to the district. Once we have a baseline of our current economic activity, trends and visitor satisfaction / spend, we can begin to measure the impact of the initiatives we support.

2.0 Tourism Strategy

- 2.1 The Tourism Strategy is in the process of being drafted and as part of this process a couple pieces of work need to be completed in order for us to understand our market. Research will be completed to ascertain what tourists want to see in Mid Devon and what we have in terms of our tourism offer (e.g. accommodation providers and tourist attractions). The outcome of this research will be to identify our strengths and any gaps that we have which will feed into the drafting of the strategy. A tourism study (completed by GL Hearn) was conducted in 2014 as evidence for the Local Plan. While it

provides some insight it has a Planning focus rather than a Tourism focus and the data used within the report related to 2011 and therefore is now five years out of date. In order to direct our future branding and identify our Unique Selling Point's (USPs) we need to build on this report and conduct a detailed study specifically for Tourism.

- 2.2 The action plan focuses on enhancing and promoting both our town centres and rural offer through a number of initiatives. A potential project is to create 'Green coat guides' for Mid Devon which will link our heritage assets in rural areas, villages and towns. Guides would be trained volunteers able to lead a group (walking or coach party) to explore our villages and historic trails such as the wool / cloth trade trail in the Culm Valley. We will embrace major events such as the Tour of Britain and be proactive in marketing the area in order that the villages and towns feel the knock on effect of these events in the future. The Council are currently monitoring the High Street Innovation Fund which supports projects that increase footfall to improve the vibrancy of our town centres including Bampton. In order to achieve these projects we will be working in partnership with our key stakeholders.
- 2.3 It is anticipated that the tourism strategy will come forward to members by the end of the 2016/17 financial year with a revised action plan to address the key findings of the research report.

Contact for more Information: Amy Tregellas, Head of Communities and Governance

Circulation of the Report: Cllr Richard Chesterton and Management Team