

ECONOMY PDG

DATE: 19 January 2017

Mid Devon Destination Management Plan for Tourism

Cabinet Member

Cllr Richard Chesterton

Responsible Officer
Scott

Economic Development & Regeneration Manager, John Bodley

Reason for Report: To update Members on the current impact tourism has on Mid Devon's local economy and how we can develop the sector over the next 5 years.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That the findings of the tourism research be noted
2. That the draft Destination Management Plan be approved for consultation

Relationship to Corporate Plan: It supports the aims of the Corporate Plan's economy objectives which is a priority for the Council.

Aim 4 - Grow the tourism sector

- Increase the number of people visiting, staying and spending money in the District
- Improve the marketing of Mid Devon as a visitor destination

Financial Implications: A budget is required to support initiatives and membership fee for the area tourism partnership.

Legal Implications: None

Risk Assessment: None

1.0 Introduction

Tourism is an important part of the District's economy, creating jobs and a sense of place for the area. If we are to grow a competitive and sustainable tourism sector, the Council will need to provide leadership and co-ordination to support the sector and facilitate partnership working.

In order to understand the position of tourism in the Mid Devon economy and its strengths and weaknesses, primary research was done during the 2016 season. The results of the research are given in the background documents:

- Mid Devon Visitor Survey Report, November 2016.
- The Economic Impact of Mid Devon's Visitor Economy and Evidence base 2015.

A summary of the findings are given below.

The results of the research were then used to create a Destination Management Plan which, once approved, will provide strategic direction for the development of the tourism sector within Mid Devon.

2.0 Visitor research

Mid Devon has the least number of visitors and tourism spend of all Devon Districts. In order to reposition Mid Devon in Devon as a competitive destination we need to understand who currently comes to Mid Devon and why. From May to October half term, 415 face to face interviews were conducted with visitors across the district. The information gathered from this survey is very valuable to identify our strengths and weaknesses as a holiday destination (no previous research has been conducted before and the report provides a wealth of knowledge).

The main findings were

- Mid Devon is predominantly a day visit destination
- The main visitor market for the district appears to be those people living within the immediate South West region
- Mid Devon largely appeals to adult only groups with just over three quarters visiting the district without children (45 years +)
- Attracts a high proportion of repeat visitors across all visitor types and is likely to be largely due to the fact that visitors to the district appear to be relatively satisfied with their visitor experience and the tourism product on offer to them when making a visit.
- The main reason for their visit was for a holiday or visiting friends and relatives.
- During their visit they planned to eat and drink, go shopping, walking, visit a family attraction and the countryside.
- Suggested improvements include: the range, quality and value for money of nightlife / evening entertainment; the availability and cleanliness of the public toilets; quality of service and value for money of car parks and the quality of service of public transport.
- Staying visitors spend the most per person per day (£20.32)
- The likelihood of a revisit was scored at 4.7 out of 5.

3.0 Destination Management Plan

The tourism sector is made up of a range of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Each organisation contributes towards a visitors experience and it is essential they work together to achieve better use and management of resources. The Destination Management Plan has been put together from local and national findings including feedback from a range of stakeholders. However, this needs to be a partnership document with strong buy-in from sector organisations and businesses. For the objectives to be achieved the sector must have time to consult on the draft document and to agree and adopt an action plan to take it forward.

The aim of the plan is to build a competitive and sustainable tourism industry, increasing the contribution tourism makes to our local economy and employment. In order to do this the key objectives are:

1. To create partnerships to enable a joint approach to growth
2. To develop a brand (identity) and promotional strategy to create regional and national awareness
3. To develop the local offer by creating a competitive product which meets our target segment needs.

4.0 The Council's Role

Mid Devon District Council has an important role in delivering a number of aspects within the Destination Management Plan. These include

- creating and supporting partnerships with the different sectoral and regional bodies
- providing business support to tourism businesses
- leading and assisting in the development and enhancement of some of the main products identified in the plan e.g. green infrastructure.
- Identifying external funding sources such as the LEADER programme which businesses and public bodies can apply for, releasing capital into the district in order to achieve some of the projects identified in the plan.

The Council is also responsible through the maintenance and appearance of the public realm for ensuring visitors have a pleasant experience:

- Maintaining the cleanliness of our car parks and public toilets.
- Supporting events, festivals, visitor information, leisure centres, parks and heritage sites.
- Public health and safety is an important element, assessing food premises and licensing.
- Planning for tourism and leisure development and preserving our conservation areas.

Mid Devon has a crucial role in fulfilling these services which attract visitors, encouraging visitors to spend in the area and persuading day visits to convert to overnight stays through the attractiveness of the area.

4.0 Next steps

Using local and national information the destination management plan has been formed and objectives have emerged from the findings. The following steps need to take place in order for the plan to be adopted and identify an action plan to achieve it:

1. To engage with the different tourism sectors and stakeholder groups. To make them aware of their roles and responsibility and to consult them on the draft objectives and priorities listed within the plan.
2. Together with partners to identify how we can meet the objectives over the next 5 years and form an action plan.
3. To bring the finalised document and action plan back to the Economy Policy Development Group for approval and endorsement of Mid Devon District Council actions within the action plan.

Contact for more Information: Amy Dugard 01884 234276

Background Papers: Mid Devon Visitor Survey Report, November 2016.
The Economic Impact of Mid Devon's Visitor Economy and Evidence base 2015.

File Reference:

Circulation of the Report: Cllr Richard Chesterton
Stephen Walford, Director of Growth