

Destination Management Plan Consultation Consolidated Report

Summary of Representation	Response
1. To create partnerships to enable a joint approach to growth	
<p>Respondents generally endorsed the partnership approach put forward in the draft destination management plan. Replies included two levels of partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some form of strategic partnership that brings all the interests of the sector together and co-ordinates a joint approach to common issues. • Practical partnerships – linking attractions, events and festival organisers and accommodation providers at a practical level through joint projects e.g. joint marketing of events and festivals <p>Mid Devon Show and Crediton Town Team both mentioned the need for stronger representation from the west of the district (Crediton)</p>	<p>There would be value in a cross-sector Tourism Forum that brings together the different interest groups – visitor attractions, accommodation providers, event organisers, food and drink businesses, town and parish councils, business groups, and local traders etc.</p> <p>The newly formed Mid Devon Attractions Association acts as a partnership group for local attractions and could be the model for other tourism-related businesses. Similar partnerships, led by the sector, need to be developed to represent other interests within the tourism economy e.g. accommodation providers, food and drink sector, trade groups etc. This could be included in the plan.</p>
1A. Develop sector partnerships and communication channels throughout the district.	
<p>A number of organisations mentioned they have databases of contacts, well developed websites, social media, and communication channels they are willing to use to contact tourism businesses (Mid Devon Show, Bampton Business Group).</p> <p>Crediton Town Team commented that Chambers of Commerce seem to have been left out of the plan.</p>	<p>Future communications need to build on existing networks and communication channels.</p> <p>The Destination Management Plan will be revised to include local business groups and chambers of commerce – FSB, Business Forum Mid Devon, Crediton Chamber of Commerce, Culm Valley in Business and their role in representing and supporting the tourism sector.</p>
1B. Create a Mid Devon Partnership to promote the District.	
(see above) There is a role for a strategic partnership which will facilitate closer working between different sectors of the tourism industry in Mid Devon, and support joint initiatives.	(see above)
1C. Build partnerships with Visit Devon, Area Tourism Partnerships, neighbouring districts, and sectors within Mid Devon	
Respondents recognise that Mid Devon is part of the wider tourism offer across Devon and the South West, and that visitors do not distinguish local authority boundaries. Equally, working with neighbouring authorities	<p>Comments noted</p> <p>The destination management plan will highlight the importance of</p>

<p>and regional organisations, rather than diminishing efforts to market the district, will help to promote the area. We are not necessarily in competition with our neighbours, we can all benefit from increased visitor numbers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “From our perspective the main focus should not be on what one might term a “zero sum game” i.e. seeking to increase tourism in competition with other Councils in the region; but rather what we can do together to increase the throughput rather than mid-Devon being merely somewhere they drive past on the way to Cornwall!” (Wellhayes Vineyard) • “We cannot be precious about LA boundaries – should be able to promote the offer of the surrounding areas accessed from Mid Devon cf. importance of Exeter as a significant attractor” (Tiverton Hotel) <p>Tiverton Hotel commented that visitors will and expect to travel large distances while staying in the area. Mid Devon needs to be promoted within the context of the wider Devon offer cf. Cycling groups will use Mid Devon as a centre and then ride out 60 -80 miles a day to different locations.</p>	<p>building relationships with Visit Devon and other regional bodies, and look for opportunities to work with neighbouring authorities and areas.</p>
<p>1D. Monitor performance of the local economy and visitor experience to increase standards</p>	
<p>A number of attractions already carry out visitor surveys and/or monitor footfall and visitor satisfaction and would be happy to extend this to include questions about wider tourism issues (Mid Devon Show, TIC, Tiverton Museum)</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The plan will reference the information currently being collected by some attractions such as footfall, visitor satisfaction surveys and website and social media analytics, and suggest using already existing channels for further research where appropriate, as well as commissioning new research where necessary.</p>

Summary of Representation	Response
<p>2. To develop a brand and promotional strategy to create regional and national awareness</p>	
<p>Respondents saw the value of having a strong brand for Mid Devon, however getting a single brand across the whole district may prove difficult. Ann Williams noted previous branding exercises such as ‘Devonshire Heartland’ and ‘Devonshire Dales’ that ultimately didn’t go anywhere.</p> <p>Any branding needs to recognise the distinctive offer of the different geographical areas of Mid Devon.</p> <p>Crediton Town Team noted: “there should be a number of geographical groupings of the district’s tourism offer, rather than a ‘one size fits all’ for the whole district, as each of the following will have their own unique characteristics.</p> <p>An example of this could be ‘food and drink’, which is highlighted throughout the document as a significant visitor attraction. We would assert that the food and drink offer in Crediton is more developed and diverse than other parts of this district.</p> <p>Our view is that suitable geographic groupings could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tiverton and its immediate rural hinterland; ○ Bampton and the gateway to Exmoor; ○ The Culm Valley; ○ Crediton and its immediate rural hinterland; and ○ More remote rural areas across the district.” 	<p>Mid Devon Attractions Association has undertaken research into branding for Mid Devon and will continue to pursue this. It is currently promoting the District under the title Visit Mid Devon (cf. MDAA Facebook page)</p> <p>The destination management plan, while recognising the benefit of working to develop a recognised brand for the whole area, will reflect the unique character of the district’s distinct geographical areas,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bampton and the Exmoor Fringe ● Tiverton and the Exe Valley ● Crediton and its rural villages ● Cullompton and the Culm Valley
<p>2A. Attract and retain more day and staying visitors, targeting over 55’s and families</p>	
<p>While accepting that the current visitor profile tends to be older people, respondents noted the need to attract a broader range of visitors, particularly;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Focus on attracting families particularly important; we already receive lots of over 55s coming in coach parties. However, these coach parties are often left to their own devices and not informed of what Tiverton/Mid Devon has to offer so improving relationships 	<p>While recognising that different attractions, accommodation, festivals and events attract different types of visitors, the destination management plan emphasises building on the current position by increasing the dwell time and spend of the core visitor profile of over 55s and families, while looking to expand this profile incrementally and meet new needs and trends within the market.</p>

<p>with coach companies is also very important.” (Tiverton TIC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Families and over 55s are our key audience so there is a role we can play here.”(Tiverton Museum) • The traditional organised coach-tour visitors are literally dying out – need to capture the younger (55-65) age range that have different wants / needs” • Independent travellers • Older visitors often have more money to spend 	
2B. Develop a brand valued by the tourism community	
<p>See comments above under 2.0</p>	<p>It is recognised that tourism businesses and local authorities will need to work together closely if it is to create a brand that has local buy-in and is accepted and valued by the whole tourism community.</p>
2C. Create a marketing and promotional strategy for the area	
<p>Respondents were keen to support a marketing and promotional strategy for the area, and accepted that a destination website is needed for Mid Devon in order to centralise information about what is on offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A destination website is needed for Mid Devon in order to centralise information, which can be used to direct visitors / residents when advertising events and the local offer. Happy to help maintain and populate such a website as it is vital we have an online presence” (Tiverton TIC). 	<p>While individual tourism businesses will continue to market and promote themselves separately, the value of joint marketing and promotion is recognised.</p> <p>Mid Devon District Council is looking to apply for funding to develop an umbrella website with funding from the LEADER programme. This will act as a hub website, promoting and signposting to individual websites and sources of information.</p>
2D. Develop the identity and advertising of our market towns	
<p>Town Councils / Town Groups wanted to make sure that their market towns are promoted appropriately and that they are fully involved in any promotional materials that were developed (e.g. joint guides, webpages etc.)</p> <p>They also highlighted the importance of the visual impact of the town and streetscene – need to be welcoming - including facilities, clear signage, interpretation boards etc.</p> <p>Tiverton TIC noted:</p>	<p>The destination management plan will emphasise the need to work together with representative groups from the market towns to create joint initiatives that will help to improve and develop the offer as well as looking to creating joint promotional materials..</p>

<p>“Signage within Tiverton is lacking leaving visitors feeling lost and unsure of what there is on offer. Need to make visitors feel welcome the minute they arrive in the town and highlight the key attractions, parking, TIS. A clear identity (and clear/more signage!) would definitely help with this and encourage visitors to stop here/stay longer.”</p>	
<p>2E. Identify promotional campaigns and activities to increase footfall</p>	
<p>Individual tourism business undertake their own promotional activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Our PR and advertising is working well. Utilising sponsorship and knowledge of the rural sector we attract several thousand visitors to the area.” (Mid Devon Show) • “Happy to feed into this if possible.” (Tiverton TIC) • “Again, happy to support any relevant campaigns, logos etc.” (Tiverton Museum) 	<p>Comments noted</p> <p>Although tourism businesses are quite successful with their individual promotional activities, there is very limited co-ordinated or joint promotional activities that promote the district as a whole, and therefore benefit everyone. There is plenty of room for further joint promotional activities.</p> <p>There is clearly a great deal of experience in the local tourism sector that can be drawn on to create promotional campaigns and activities as the destination management plan is taken forward.</p>

Summary of Representation	Response
<p>3. To develop the local offer to create a competitive product which meets our target segment needs.</p>	
<p>Respondents noted a number of schemes they are individually undertaking to improve the local offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We are constantly trying to invest in the site and make it an unmissable day” (The Bear Trail) • “Most of the Town Team’s projects since 2014 have enhanced the local tourist offer (CredFest, Flags, Boniface projects, History Trail, Get Out magazine) and could have greater impact on visitor numbers if properly marketed.” (Crediton Town Team) • “The Town Team’s plans to build a new Community Hub for Crediton, providing a lively entertainment venue for Mid Devon (film, theatre, music, gallery, food), would significantly boost the 	<p>Comments Noted</p>

<p>tourist offer” (Crediton Town Team)</p> <p>Rhys Roberts of Tiverton Hotel noted that Mid Devon is able to provide a competitively priced offer, as, not being a honey-pot destination, it is not subject to the price inflation associated with popular destinations – this could be part of its attraction.</p>	<p>Good value for money could be part of the branding as long as it is also part of a quality offer.</p>
<p>3A. Develop products and experiences in line with the target market and trends.</p>	
<p>Respondents recognised that visitors are often looking for a range of activities and attractions they can access within a short geographical distance and within the short period of their visit. There is a need to package individual venues, attractions etc. to make them more sellable to the market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Development of SW Wine Trail - We are actively exploring the scope for a South West Wine trail which would bring visitors through Mid Devon as part of a tour of vineyards. Responsible Body: South West Vineyards Association and other Regional District Councils” (Wellhayes Vineyard) • “MDS is a singular event, we promote local businesses and rural activities, we also promote the other shows in the area, including Honiton and North Devon, and Uffculme, which is a reciprocal agreement.” (Mid Devon Show) 	<p>The destination management plan will help to facilitate joint working and the presentation and packaging of tourism activities to create themed ‘itineraries’ attractive to the independent visitor and that meet current market trends. For instance, the presentation of country walks through the destination website will make it easier for visitors to create their own walking holiday.</p> <p>There are extensive proposals for developments at Junction 27 which could create a substantial tourist destination focusing on families (a key target audience) and act as an attractor that encourages further exploration of the area.</p>
<p>3B. Support tourism business development</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “MDS supports tourism business, by offering a single point of contact on the show day, through trade stand, and food and craft centres.” (Mid Devon Show) 	<p>The Destination Management Plan needs to be linked into Mid Devon District Council’s Economic Strategy to ensure that tourism businesses have the advice and support they need to develop and grow.</p> <p>The District Council will continue to attract funding to support the tourism sector through programmes such as the European-funded LEADER programme.</p>
<p>3C. Enhance the evening and night time economy</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A better evening offering (activities, food and drink and regular events) would encourage people to stay in the area rather than simply passing through.” (Tiverton TIC) • “... although the lack of evening entertainment and nightlife is mentioned, we think it’s important to understand exactly what is meant by ‘nightlife/evening entertainment’ in each of the areas mentioned previously and what impact this would have on visitor’s desired experience of staying in a ‘calmer and laid back’ environment” (Crediton Town Team) 	<p>Having interesting things to do and places to go in the evening is an important part of attracting visitors to the area, The destination management plan will seek to facilitate the development and promotion of pubs, cafes and restaurants, entertainment venues and festivals and events to cater for this market.</p>
3D. Develop green infrastructure	
<p>Respondents recognised the importance as a major attractor for visitors of Mid Devon’s green infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This is where the work needs to be done, so save your money, don't spend any more on consultations, on more surveys, on 'developing a brand' or any of the other bits. Spend it on making Mid Devon a destination for cycling and walking holidays, on cycle paths, cycle routes, on an outdoor swimming pool and visitor attraction, on connecting up our existing visitor attractions more effectively by walking and cycle routes, by making the riverside beautiful in Tiverton, on promoting what we already have more effectively by bringing together those attractions into a 'visit mid devon' leaflet/map/brochure and easy to find and navigate page on your website. Oh, and free parking.” (Tiverton Town Councillor) 	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The destination management plan recognises that the high quality of Mid Devon’s countryside is probably the single most important attractor for visitors, and that we need to enhance, package and promote it in such a way that more visitors are able to access and appreciate it.</p>
3E. Enhance food and drink offer – food tourism	
<p>Respondents recognised that local food and drink is an important draw for many visitors, particularly the over 55s, and an important industry trend.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Providing a vibrant local food culture through encouraging local producers, and linking them with food and drink establishments, accommodation providers, and event organisers will remain a key theme for the destination plan, and will link into Mid Devon District Council's Economic Strategy.</p> <p>Linking potential developments at J27 with local food and drink producers could be a good opportunity to showcase the local food offer</p>

	(cf. South Gloucester Service Stations)
3F. Develop events & festival	
<p>A number of respondents noted the importance of Events and Festivals in encouraging tourism, particularly in the absence of other key attractors. There are a number of established events in the district, but there is room to initiate new events and festivals that appeal to different interests and markets.</p> <p>More can be done to link accommodation providers to festivals and events so that more tourism businesses can benefit from the increased visitor numbers.</p>	Comments accepted
<i>Overall Standards</i>	
<p>Tiverton Museum noted that Industry Awards can have a role in pushing up standards in the tourism sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “We have been successful in being awarded a number of awards in the past 6 years, and have entered the Visit Devon tourism awards for a number of years, and will continue to do so (and enter for other awards). Mid Devon businesses are always under-represented at these awards.” (Tiverton Museum) 	The destination management plan will encourage Mid Devon businesses to put themselves forward for tourism awards and maybe sponsor a local award to encourage local involvement.

Summary of Representation	Response
Other Comments	
<p>“I feel that one of the better ways to proceed would be to establish a specialized committee format to get a small number of experienced tourism operators to work alongside a similar small number of representatives from the economic/tourism/development departments of MDDC to come up with the market research as required, set out a marketing strategy and implementation of the plan without squandering all the available budget on these; and then get a solid advertising/promotion programme up and running.” (Anne Maclean Williams)</p>	Comment noted

<p>“I think the partnership models to date have failed to demonstrate particularly impressive results or successes and it is all too easy to be sidetracked into macro subjects such as “national” or “regional” when what we are trying to achieve is a successful promotion and consolidation (and possibly expansion as well) of the tourism sector in Mid Devon so that it can positively contribute to the local economy in the years ahead.” (Anne Maclean Williams)</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>“It would be useful to have a geographic/area breakdown of the types of accommodation available, although we agree that Crediton would benefit from having some hotel accommodation in the area;” (Crediton Town Team)</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>“Overall, the evidence of a high return rate by visitors (page 6) indicates that many of the elements that make Mid Devon attractive to visitors are already in place. An issue may be about how the district is branded/promoted and what impact would some of the proposals (i.e. nightlife, attracting a younger age group) have on the dominant market demographic (45-55+) should these areas be developed. The consequences of such developments need to be assessed and understood before a strategy is devised to address them.” (Crediton Town Team)</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>“Tourism management plans tend to rate paid-for visitor-centre attractions above all other attractions in strategic planning terms on the assumption that they bring a strong economic return to the locality. We would contest that assertion. Places like Diggerland will certainly have an attraction for entertainment purposes, but like the proposed Junction 27 Eden Westwood –the profits will either go out of County or offshore to a multi-national insurance group. These attractions become trapped in a vicious cycle of need for profits dictated by their investors and compete ruthlessly against more sustainable and local neighbourhood attractions.” (Crediton Town Team)</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>“Health, in the broadest sense, is becoming a more and more important factor in social policy terms as well as funding terms. A tourism management plan would do well to engage with the body of evidence</p>	<p>Comments Noted</p>

<p>which embraces mental and physical well-being, and indeed champion that as a USP” (Crediton Town Team)</p>	
<p>“Tiverton Town Council does a great deal to promote tourism in Mid Devon but it would seem it receives little if no recognition for this from MDDC. Hopefully this will now change.” (Tiverton Town Council)</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>

Consultation Feedback was received from:

- Bampton Business Group
- Wellhayes Vineyard
- Mid Devon Show
- The Bear Trail
- Tiverton TIC
- Crediton Town Team
- Tiverton Hotel
- Bickleigh Mill
- Tiverton Museum
- Tiverton Town Councillors
- Tiverton Town Council
- Ann Williams (individual)
- Visit South Devon