

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Vision

To deliver authentic and distinctive destination experiences, with a clear focus on the needs of residents, visitors and the environment, which will contribute to a 5% growth, year on year, in the England tourism market by 2020.

Objectives

1. To increase understanding among decision makers and stakeholders of the economic, social and environmental value of effective destination management.
2. To increase the number of areas implementing co-ordinated and focused destination management, with the aim of improving the performance of local visitor economies and generating wider local benefits.
3. To share best practice among strategic planners and practitioners to ensure high quality, integrated destination management strategies.

What is Destination Management?

Destinations are disparate and multifaceted places that are host to numerous stakeholders with their own specific needs. Experience shows that without continued collaboration and coordination, places do not evolve with a common purpose. To create a successful and sustainable visitor economy, all the components that make a successful destination need to be managed and integrated over the long-term, focusing on the needs of both residents and visitors. These components include:

- The things that attract people to the destination; the natural environment, heritage and culture, iconic buildings, retail, sport and leisure facilities, food, gardens, events and scenery. These make a place special, distinctive and capable of engendering civic pride.
- The infrastructure that helps to reinforce and shape the sense of place and make it an easy place to visit; the quality of design, the signs, transport, parking and orientation, interpretation, public spaces and amenities.
- The services that cater for the needs of visitors, and of residents, generating economic and social activity and increasing spending, including the hotels and bars, pubs, restaurants and galleries, the everyday events and the day-to-day services that make a place clean, safe and welcoming.

The elements of destination management are diverse and are often the individual responsibility of a range of public and private sector entities. Destination management is a process that ensures that the visitor experience is of the highest quality and continues to develop and adapt to meet the needs and expectations of visitors. This will achieve a sustainable return from visitor expenditure for the local economy.

Destination Management is a collective and holistic approach – it is the glue that holds together a variety of interdependent, co-existing partners that together can make a destination greater than the sum of its parts.

Why take action on Destination Management?

Destinations that are well managed will be more likely to generate ‘wise growth’ (see Wise Growth Action Plan) in their visitor economy, and are more likely to maximise the benefits of that growth in long term additional income and jobs. The best managed destinations are also likely to excel in attracting new investment, in keeping value-added jobs, in bringing in new talent and in stimulating innovation. Great destinations are great places to live and work as well as to visit.

Effective management of the visitor economy at a destination level not only contributes to a positive visitor experience but can enhance and protect the environment while supporting the interests of the communities and businesses within it.

Delivery of the England Research and Intelligence Programme, a key component of the Research and Intelligence Action Plan, is crucial to successful destination management. Understanding who visits and why is essential to the effective strategic management of all destinations; whether the aim is to manage high numbers of visitors, to generate growth in visitor expenditure, or to encourage visitors to the destination out of season.

Successful destinations make the most of their appeal to deliver benefits to the whole community, and they do this by having a clear, strategic sense of why their place attracts visitors and what investment it needs to sustain or enhance that appeal. Successful destinations have a destination development and management plan, and mechanisms in place to deliver that plan.

Challenges and Opportunities

- England is moving from a period of high public investment in destinations and the organisations that support and manage them, to a more challenging financial environment. The landscape for tourism support is also changing, as will the role of the private sector in setting priorities which will become more prominent. It is now even more important that knowledge and understanding about destination management is shared and made widely available.
- Destination management will be pivotal in the achievement of the growth targets of the Strategic Framework for English Tourism. The associated Action Plans highlight a number of areas in which destinations have a key role to play but these plans may not focus on wider opportunities to achieve growth that other sectors of the local economy can provide. For example, evidence suggests that the night time economy is an area that many urban destinations can capitalise upon.
- Given the diversity of the destinations within England, and the range of organisations involved in their management, it is not appropriate to suggest that there is only one, optimum way of managing an area. Each destination has its own unique set of issues, and solutions need to be tailored to these conditions. Strengthening the knowledge, ability and skills of those who manage these places will help organisations respond to the unique challenges they face.
- Destination management is not solely about marketing. The task includes developing the product, maintaining and enhancing the experience and providing a common vision for public, private and local authority partners to work towards.

- Destination management does not happen by a single organisation being in total control of the whole. Effective destination management really does mean teamwork and partnerships.
- Creating effective relationships between Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Authorities and tourism businesses will be critical in providing strategic leadership in developing local visitor economies. Building and sustaining those relationships requires the right people, with knowledge and understanding of the visitor economy, and with the credibility to speak for the businesses in the sector.

The Action Plan

The aim of this Action Plan is to help everyone involved in managing places to understand the value of the visitor economy, and the importance of destination management. Building on the advocacy function of this Action Plan, it seeks to expand the number of places which have adopted a focused, integrated and partnership approach. Furthermore, by providing support to share good practice among places and by sign posting help and advice for practitioners, this Action Plan will help to improve the quality and sustainability of destination management.

Objective 1: To increase understanding among decision makers and stakeholders of the economic, social and environmental value of effective destination management.

ACTION	LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)	PARTNER SIGN UP	OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE
i. Agree a common understanding of destination management among current leading practitioners and organisations who champion tourism management. This is the basis of the advocacy, competence and exemplar practice that follows.	VisitEngland	Local Government Association (LGA) English National Parks Authorities Association (ENPAA) Tourism Management Institute (TMI) British Destinations (BD) Tourism Alliance (TA) Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) Historic Towns Forum (HTF) Action for Market Towns (AMT)	An agreement of a common understanding of destination management by VE and the Destination Management Forum.
ii. Make the case for why destination management is important both at a local level in creating better destinations and at a national level in realising the government's growth targets for the industry.	Destination Management Forum	LGA ENPAA TMI BD ACTM HTF AMT	Agreement of a communications plan with the LGA on how to engage LAs and other stakeholders. Implementation of the agreed communications plan. Publishing a destination management portal.

Objective 2: To increase the number of areas implementing co-ordinated and focused destination management, with the aim of improving the performance of local visitor economies and generating wider local benefits.

ACTION	LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)	PARTNER SIGN UP	OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE
i. Establish and agree the components of good destination management. This will include a methodology which allows destinations to: 1) Assess their positioning of the visitor economy within the destination’s strategic context 2) Measure their performance; and, 3) Demonstrate their impact.	VisitEngland	LGA ENPAA TA TMI BD ACTM HTF AMT	Publication of a performance matrix against which organisations can measure themselves.
ii. Establish a group of exemplar destinations based on agreed positioning and performance criteria. This group will: a. Own the destination management action plan for its three year duration; and, b. Help deliver the implementation of actions. This group will be part of the Destination Management Forum (either the main group or a sub group).	VisitEngland	Destination Management Organisations	Establish group. Significant progress made against the action plan objectives.
iii. Publish a list of Destination Management Organisations that are working towards achieving all components of the performance and positioning matrix (action i).	Destination Management Forum		Details published on the VisitEngland corporate site.
iv. Build on existing networks and events (for those who are engaged in destination management in its broadest context) in order to facilitate an improved understanding and adoption of the DM performance matrix.	Destination Management Forum	LGA ENPAA TA TMI BD ACTM HTF AMT	Destination Managers better supported and able to learn from others experiences. An increase in the events and networks discussing effective good practice. A proactive approach to engage through a communications plan.

Objective 3: To share best practice among strategic planners and practitioners to ensure high quality, integrated destination management strategies.

ACTION	LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)	PARTNER SIGN UP	OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE
<p>i. Research existing resources for the management of places and destinations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the range of materials available and identify gaps. Examples of materials could include the well-established Destination Management Handbook, Mosaic Place Making Toolkit or Living Places. • Identify case studies and examples to help improve the process of destination management, e.g. how to develop a destination management plan. 	VisitEngland	LGA ENPAA TMI British Destinations ACTM HTF AMT	<p>Better access to resources on how to manage destinations, assisting progress and creating more compelling destinations.</p> <p>Improved use of tools and resources.</p>
<p>ii. Develop a portal that will enable key resources to be sourced by those with a role in managing destinations. The portal will have two key themes – people and place:</p> <p>The ‘People’ section will host the wide range of materials that support the development of competencies and skills in the field of destination management to underpin understanding at a local level (e.g. the post graduate qualifications from TMI).</p> <p>The ‘Place’ section will be a platform that allows the sharing of information and resources around destination management (i.e. not just for the individual). This will include briefings on areas for growth potential that destinations can consider, e.g. the night time economy and/ or Purple Flag.</p> <p>This will be an open source for anyone to access, amend and contribute towards. Managed in conjunction with key partners this resource will operate as a Destination Management Wiki.</p>	VisitEngland	LGA ENPAA TMI British Destinations ACTM HTF AMT	<p>Publish a destination management portal on the VisitEngland corporate site.</p> <p>Destination Managers better informed and supported.</p> <p>Information easier to access at the local level.</p> <p>Increase in number of those signing up and completing qualifications in destination management.</p> <p>Improved take up of tools and resources.</p>
<p>iii. Share the lessons from the transition pathfinder programme. This programme is designed to facilitate the sharing of experiences during the evolving landscapes for management of the visitor economy at a local level.</p>	VisitEngland	Visit Peak District Bath Tourism Plus Marketing Manchester Broads Tourism The “pathfinder peer” network	Destinations supported through learning about other experiences of transition.