



Tourism

Devon County Council's
Role and Action Programme

2008-2011



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Foreword

The Tourism Role and Action Programme demonstrates the County Council's commitment to developing and promoting sustainable tourism in Devon. The County Council pledges to help develop a tourism industry in Devon that is sustainable - economically, socially and environmentally.



This is a time for major change for the management of tourism in Devon with the establishment of the Devon Destination Management Organisation. This will present new opportunities and a new focus for the County Council's activities which should ultimately lead to a better co-ordinated sector that operates more effectively and is likely to be more profitable and sustainable.

A more sustainable tourism sector will result in increased employment and this, through its economic impact, will improve the quality of life of Devon's residents. This document provides a strategic framework for the County Council in its approach to tourism including policies, actions and resources.

I look forward to the delivery of the policies within this refreshed document which will maximise the new tourism opportunities.

Cllr Humphrey Temperley

*Executive Member for Strategic Planning,
Economy and Regional Affairs*

April 2008

Insert cover photo: Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site Banner Project, Exmouth.

Main cover photo: Morwellham Quay part of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.

If you would like a summary of this in a different format such as large print, Braille or tape, or in a different language, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 0845 155 1015 or email: customer@devon.gov.uk

1 Foreword and Introduction

Introduction to Role and Action Programmes

Devon County Council, through its Strategic Plan, has set out its priorities for action to meet the challenges that face it. To help meet its objectives, the County Council has a series of "Role and Action Programmes" for some key areas of its work that are not covered by formal statutory plans. These areas of work include the economy and regeneration, landscape, biodiversity, the historic environment, the maritime environment, the arts and tourism.

The Role and Action Programmes give the strategic context, for the next three years, for each of these areas of work and then set out Devon County Council's role and functions in relation to them. The Role and Action Programmes establish a series of objectives and related. A clear outcome is stated to enable us to judge when an objective has been reached.

As some objectives may be long-term and outcomes may be delivered over the three year life of the Role and Action Programme, an Annual Action Plan will be published to state the work the County Council intends to undertake during that year. The delivery of the Annual Action Plan and the Role and Action programme overall will be monitored to ensure our resources are used effectively.

Introduction to Devon's Tourism

To many people throughout the country, the word Devon is synonymous with childhood holidays spent at the seaside, where the sun constantly shone, and the holiday industry was prosperous. Tourism is vitally important to Devon's economy but the industry itself is fragmented; many resorts are in need of regeneration; jobs are low-paid, often seasonal and insecure plus competition from abroad and other parts of the UK is high. External factors also impact on the tourism sector, for example fuel prices, animal diseases, extreme weather events, terrorist attacks, world political and sporting events, exchange rates as well as our environmental conscience.

Devon does, however, have a wealth of tourism potential such as its high quality natural environment and built heritage, local food and drink and cultural activities. New and exciting opportunities are also on the horizon including the establishment of the Devon Destination Management Organisation and the Cultural Olympiad, the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympic Games. The strategic objective for tourism is to maximise the economic benefits whilst balancing the need to adopt a sustainable approach, to ensure that the natural, historic and cultural environment is enhanced and protected.



Key Websites

Devon County Council	www.devon.gov.uk/sustainabletourism
South West Tourism	www.swtourism.co.uk
The Devon DMO	www.destination-devon.com

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Devon's Tourism

Tourism in Devon

Devon is blessed with a wealth of opportunities for tourists. The natural, cultural and built environment, character and image of Devon are key factors in attracting visitors to the County.

Natural Environment - Countryside and Coast

The natural environment in Devon is a key tourism and recreational resource. The County has a wide range of landscapes, habitats and a rich variety of flora and fauna. The natural environment is of national and international importance with interest ranging from coastal estuaries and shorelines, Culm Grasslands, Devon Redlands, wooded valleys, granite uplands, and heather moorlands. Highlights include:

- Three internationally recognised sites: the East Devon and Dorset Coast World Heritage Site, designated for its geological interest, Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site, designated for its cultural landscape and North Devon's Biosphere Reserve centred around Braunton Burrows.
- Countryside of national importance including the whole of Dartmoor National Park, a third of Exmoor National Park and five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. 34% of Devon's landscape is protected by these designations.
- Almost 200 Sites of Special Scientific Interest covering 8% of the County's land surface. 18 sites are recognised as being of international nature conservation importance.
- Two lengthy and varied coastlines totalling over 250 miles / 400 Kms

Cultural Environment - Built Heritage, Museums, Arts, Crafts, Festivals, Food and Recreation

Devon's has an established network of distinctive local museums, galleries, art centres, theatres and festivals, many fine examples of heritage buildings and numerous recreational networks, are all features of the County's rich cultural life. Highlights include:



View from Great Hangman

- The County's rich tradition of local crafts and festivals and events which all contribute towards the local distinctiveness of Devon.
- Local food and drink, including products such as Devon's ruby-red beef, clotted cream and cider.
- Numerous recreation opportunities which range from walking, cycling and horse-riding to sailing, fishing and surfing. Devon's harbours, ports and quaysides should also be seen as an important part of this cultural resource.
- A fantastic range of historic market towns and cities such as Exeter, Barnstaple and Totnes which have great charm and character and are important centres in their own right, particularly for day visits for shopping, cultural, business and leisure opportunities.
- Devon's historic environment is one of its greatest assets and the County has a heritage rich in historic remains from prehistoric sites on Dartmoor to cathedrals, castles, historic houses, military and industrial archaeological sites.
- Emigration from Devon has been considerable in the past and a number of people, both from the UK and from abroad,

visit the county to trace their family history or to see the places where their ancestors once lived.

Tourism Infrastructure

- Devon's tourism industry has traditionally been centred on its coastal resorts ranging from Torbay (Torquay, Paignton and Brixham), one of Britain's leading resort centres, to a variety of medium and smaller resorts like Ilfracombe, Exmouth, Sidmouth, Westward Ho! and Salcombe, each of which has its own distinct character.
- Devon has a wide range of tourist accommodation with a total capacity of almost 250,000 bedspaces. At the date of publication, over 180 businesses in Devon are members of the Green Tourism Business Scheme and 47 are members of the David Bellamy Award.
- There are over 200 varied tourist attractions in Devon, widely distributed throughout the County. The Devon Association of Tourist Attractions (DATA) has around 44 members. Some of the most popular include Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway, Dartington Cider Press Centre, Crealy Adventure Park, Paignton Zoo, National Marine Aquarium and Clovelly Village.
- Devon has 3,065 miles (4,930km) of Public Rights of Way, moorland and coastal

footpaths (including the South West Coast Path) and rural bridleways, 95% of which are officially classified as easy to use. The County has a network of eighteen long-distance recreational walking routes including the Two Moors Way, Exe Valley Way and East Devon Way.

- Devon has over 150 miles (233km) of National Cycle Network including the Granite Way and Tarka Trail.

The Visitor Economy

The total number of 'tourist nights' spent in Devon in 2006 was around 33 million, equivalent to around 8 million visitors. The estimated spend on accommodation in Devon by tourists was around £1,200million in 2006, with an estimated £440million remaining as income to Devon. Tourism generates a substantial proportion of employment within the County and it has been estimated that the equivalent of at least 66,000 full-time jobs (approximately 13% of the total workforce in Devon) are created through tourism with many more created indirectly through the multiplier effect.

The County Council believes that tourism has a significant role to play in the future prosperity of Devon and enhancing the quality of life for visitors and residents alike. Tourists visit the County primarily for the rural landscape and the natural environment, care must be taken to ensue that growth in tourism is sustainable and that it does not damage our precious resources.

Tourism Trends

Growth in tourism in rural areas is being maintained and compensates for the decreasing market share in traditional resorts such as Torbay (Torquay, Paignton and Brixham), Ilfracombe, Exmouth, Sidmouth, Westward Ho! and Salcombe. Long holidays account for just under half of all tourist nights regionally but have declined in number over recent years. At the same time short breaks and activity breaks have both grown substantially and there has been a small but steady increase in visitors from overseas. The number of visitors making late bookings has also increased dramatically in recent years. Although families still make up the majority of the tourism market in Devon, fewer families are now visiting the county. There has been an increase in both young and middle-



Arlington Court

aged couples and people of retirement age. The largest proportion of tourism expenditure is spent on food and drink.

The UK has experienced steady economic growth in the past ten years and this looks set to continue for the immediate future. Increasing wealth leads to more tourism and leisure activity although this does not necessarily work in favour of Britain as a strong pound encourages British people to holiday abroad and makes the UK a more expensive destination for overseas visitors. It is even more necessary to provide high quality, good customer service and value for money. Environmental quality and distinctiveness is also becoming more and more important to Devon's visitors, exemplified through the success of the recent Discover Devon Naturally Project.

Key Tourism Trends

- Tourism growth in rural areas
- Substantial increase in short breaks and activity breaks
- Increase in overseas visitors
- Devon's visitors increasingly demanding environmental quality and distinctiveness

Challenges

The County Council recognises that in order to realise the full potential of tourism for years to come, it is essential that any growth in tourism is truly sustainable. This means:

- Protecting and enhancing the environment (natural, built and cultural);
- Helping the tourism industry to be profitable and prosperous;
- Welcoming, involving and satisfying our visitors and
- Engaging and bringing benefits to our host communities.

In particular, it must be recognised that the single most important driver for visitors to the county is the landscape, the coastline, the cultural heritage; the quality of Devon's natural and built environment.



Driving up the quality and competitiveness of tourism businesses in the county will increase value and respond to the changing demands of Devon's existing and potential visitors. Devon faces the challenge of changing perceptions of the county as a traditional family summer beach holiday destination to a vibrant, year-round visitor and business destination.

During the lifetime of this plan, a new organisation, the Devon Destination Management Organisation (the Devon DMO), will be coordinating destination management across the county. 'Destination Management' is a means of translating sustainability and quality objectives into practice. Further information on the Devon DMO can be found in Appendix 2.

Key Challenges

- To develop truly sustainable tourism
- To drive up quality and competitiveness
- To change traditional perceptions of the county
- To help establish an effective Destination Management Organisation for Devon

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Strategic Context

National Tourism Policy and Planning Guidance

There are several national, regional and local plans and policy statements which influence tourism development in Devon.

Winning: A tourism strategy for 2012 and beyond (published in September 2007).

This Strategy is a statement of intent by government and the tourism industry, committing to working together to make the very most of the 2012 opportunity for tourism. A high proportion of the economic benefits of the Olympic Games will come from tourism. The strategy's action plan for the six years between 2007 and 2013 includes:

- marketing the UK at home and overseas with a campaign starting at the Beijing handover;
- making the most of the Cultural Olympiad;
- introducing new initiatives in product quality (the hotel "star" schemes);
- improving skills through the National Skills Strategies and
- planning for real changes in the industry's response to disability issues.

The Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism (published in May 2006) replaced PPG21 in 2006 and is designed to ensure that planners understand the importance of tourism and take this fully into account when preparing development plans and taking planning decisions. The guidance is also designed to ensure that planners and the tourism industry work together effectively to facilitate, promote and deliver new tourism development in a sustainable way.

Regional Tourism Policy and Planning Guidance

Towards 2015: Shaping Tomorrow's Tourism

(published in January 2005) is designed to bring leadership and direction to the development of a truly sustainable, valuable tourism industry for the South West. South West Regional Development Agency and South West Tourism identifies three key strategic aims to form a focal point for future action:

- drive up quality;
- deliver truly sustainable tourism and
- create superior destination management arrangements for the region.

The region is also expected to benefit financially throughout this period with an estimated annual income from tourism increasing by £1.2 billion.

The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West drafted by GOSW sets out the government's planning and transport policies for the region for a 15 year period. The strategy provides a framework for determining planning applications, as well as for preparing both Local Development Documents and Local Transport Plans. Once the South West RSS is published it will replace the Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10). The Draft RSS has three key tourism policies, relating to:

- sustainable tourism (TO1);
- safeguarding and investing in tourism destinations (TO2) and
- new, high profile attractions (TO3).

To prevent any void in strategic planning policy, the current Devon Structure Plan policies (including those relating to tourism) are 'saved' until the RSS is formally adopted, anticipated in 2008/9.

Local Policy and Planning Guidance

The role of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 – 2011 compiled by the Devon Strategic Partnership sets out the strategic vision for communities in Devon. It provides a vehicle for considering and deciding how to address difficult cross-cutting issues such as the economic future, social exclusion and climate change. The strategy sets out the following vision for Devon:

We want Devon to be:

- England's greenest county with the strongest local communities that are prosperous and welcoming with an excellent quality of life and a sustainable future.

Sustainable tourism can help to tackle the key issues set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy in the following areas:

- Provide new skills, training and job opportunities for young people in Devon;
- Help initiate regeneration, especially in resorts and rural areas;
- Sustain local services such as public transport, shops, post offices, museums and cinemas;
- Provide a climate for enterprise and innovation; and
- Generate income from cultural tourism, local food and drink and activities such as walking, cycling and horse riding which are also beneficial for people's health;

Each of the eight District Councils and the two National Parks in Devon are in the process of developing their Local Development Frameworks. These are folders of local development documents that outline how planning will be managed in each area outlining area specific policies, including those related to tourism.

The organisation of local government in Devon is currently being considered. The impact of any future changes will be taken into account in developing Annual Action Plans.



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Devon County Council's Strategic Role and Functions

Devon County Council Strategic Plan

Our Devon: A focus on the future is the County Council's Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011. Five priorities are identified as the focus for special attention and effort over this five year period. These are:

- Giving Devon's children and young people the best possible start in life
- Strengthening Devon's economy
- Celebrating Devon's culture
- Improving Devon's environment
- Promoting independence and choice for Devon's adults.

A focus on these priorities will help to tackle many of the key challenges facing Devon and are issues which the County Council believes it should take the lead in addressing. The priorities also reflect the views expressed by the people of Devon when asked what they thought the County Council's priorities should be.

Making Devon Greener

The County Council is also committed in making Devon 'England's greenest county'. Making Devon Greener is a cross cutting theme that spans the breadth of the Strategic Plan. Each priority within the plan is assessed to see how it contributes towards this agenda.

Sustainable tourism makes a direct contribution towards each of the priorities identified in the Strategic Plan in the following ways:

Strengthening Devon's Economy

- Promote the interests of Devon and use our influence regionally, nationally and internationally to attract funding and support to improve the local economy;
- Encourage the development of new businesses, the social economy and co-operative enterprise, skills and work opportunities and promote the County as a prime location for inward investment and tourism;



- Work with communities and partners to help regenerate communities where this is needed;
- Support local labour, services and produce, minimising the leakage from the local economy.

Celebrating Devon's Culture

- Promote awareness of, support and sustain culture and heritage in the County;
- Develop the County's cultural tourism infrastructure including the support for new 'iconic' projects;
- Improve access to the countryside through walking, cycling and horse riding networks;
- Contribute to the Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Improving Devon's Environment

- Promote and conserve Devon's natural and historic environment;
- Ensure, through local planning, that the development needs of Devon are met in ways that safeguard and enhance its unique environment;
- Encourage sustainable business practice to tourism businesses;
- Promote a reduction in waste generated by visitors, encouraging more recycling and the safe disposal of waste;
- Maintain and improve the transport network including pedestrian, cycle, road, rail, air and sea networks;

- Develop a County transport system that is sustainable, integrated, efficient safe and accessible.

Promoting independence and choice for Devon's adults and Giving Devon's children and young people the best possible start in life

- Improve the availability, access and use of public transport in both rural and urban areas;
- Improve the level of skills and career opportunities available for Devon's residents;
- Develop learning opportunities through interpretation of natural and historic features;
- Help to alleviate poverty and tackle social exclusion.

Devon County Council's Role in Tourism

Devon County Council is engaged in a wide range of interventions to facilitate the positive development of the tourism sector. Objectives for 2008 – 2011 are laid out in Section 5. DCC's current role in tourism is summarised below:

Strategic Regional Activities

- Supporting the Devon DMO in influencing South West Tourism, the Regional Development Agency, the Regional Assembly, Natural England and other bodies to ensure that the needs of Devon are recognised and that the county's competitive position is secure.

Stimulating the flow of investment and expenditure into Devon through tourism

- Supporting the development of an effective Devon DMO;
- Developing and marketing the Devon brand for UK and overseas audiences;
- Encouraging greater professionalism and improved quality standards within the tourism Sector;



- Maximising opportunities for external funding;
- Optimising new opportunities afforded by ICT developments;
- Measuring the effectiveness and economic benefits of specific actions;
- Monitoring performance and investing in market research and intelligence within the tourism sector;
- Providing a dedicated visitor information service through www.discoverdevon.com and the Holiday Line.

Strategic Planning Authority for tourism (until the formal adoption of the RSS)

- Assessing planning applications against saved Structure Plan tourism policies;
- Providing strategic advice on major tourism development.



Grand Western Canal

As Highway Authority

- Managing public rights of way and development of the recreational footpath and bridleway network including the South West Coast Path National Trail;
- Increasing cycling opportunities especially off-road routes linked to the National Cycle Network (NCN);
- Developing public transport services for tourists;
- Providing tourism brown signing and roadside information panels.

Sustainable Development

- Protecting and enhancement of the natural and historic environment;
- Encouraging businesses to adopt sustainable practices, including undertaking training, mentoring and joining the Green Tourism Business Scheme;
- Providing choices for non-car use for tourists;
- Increasing awareness and understanding of visitors;
- Developing training and learning opportunities for local people and encourage and promote tourism as a life long, career choice;
- Facilitating links between tourism businesses and local food and drink producers and the creative sector;

Countryside Management Services

- Managing Stover and Grand Western Canal Country Parks and picnic sites as facilities for visitors;
- Acting as partners for five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Sustainable Tourism Partnerships

- Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site Steering Group;
- Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site Partnership;
- North Devon's Biosphere Reserve Partnership;
- Devon DMO Sustainable Tourism Action Group (STAG);
- South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership Tourism Working Group;
- South Hams Sustainable Tourism Initiative;
- Devon Environmental Business Initiative;
- Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership.

Devon Record Office

- Supporting and complementing the work of Heritage Outreach Officer;
- Working with MLA South West and Devon Museums Group.

5 Strategic Objectives

Four policy themes have been identified in relation to the County Council's role in tourism in Devon. Three of these themes reflect the objectives identified in the Regional Tourism Strategy 'Towards 2015 - Shaping Tomorrow's Tourism'. A fourth policy theme has been added to recognise areas of work relating to increasing the economic value of tourism across the county.

Objectives have been identified under each of the four policy themes. Objectives relating to coastal and resort regeneration are now included in the Regeneration RAP.

Each year the County Council will prioritise actions to achieve each objective and publish them in the form of an annual action plan.

Theme 1: Increasing the Economic Value of Tourism in Devon

Objective 1.1

Develop the Devon Brand to increase recognition of Devon as a vibrant, environmentally responsible, year-round visitor and business destination.



Devon County Council will:

- Support the implementation of the Devon Brand across visitor audiences, raising the profile and image of Devon as a year-round quality visitor destination;
- Facilitate and enable businesses to adopt and implement the Devon Brand through online information and a Devon Ambassador Programme.



Teignmouth

Outcomes:

- A higher proportion of trips taken outside the main summer season;
- An increased market share of tourism expenditure through attracting higher value market segments, in particular out of season, and encouraging day visitors to stay longer.

Objective 1.2

Support the Devon Destination Management Organisation to rationalise tourism structures, maximise resources and establish a single focus and vision.

Devon County Council will:

- Work to achieve a genuine public and private sector partnership;
- Take a lead on appropriate programmes within the Devon DMO.

Outcomes:

- Improved performance and competitiveness of the tourism industry in Devon;
- Increased private sector investment in tourism and maintaining levels of public sector intervention;
- Achievement of a single vision, strategy and voice for tourism in Devon.



Woolacombe

Objective 1.3

Develop a better understanding of tourism and help to improve the performance of tourism businesses.

Devon County Council will:

- Evaluate the impact of tourism, especially in sensitive and protected sites, to ensure tourism is managed properly and has community support;
- Maximise the opportunities presented by developments in ICT;
- Encourage the development of web based information to attract and inform visitors and ensure a 'joined-up' approach to destination management;
- Encourage the use of a single tourism database to support destination marketing and management through the Devon DMO.

Outcomes:

- Improved knowledge of business performance, on-going trends, visitor aspirations and attitudes and develop tourism which is integrated into the local economy with improved performance of tourism businesses;
- Efficient use of ICT throughout the industry with visitors able to access information both before and during their stay;
- Online booking capabilities across the sector enabling tourism businesses the access to global markets and retaining a competitive position.

Theme 2:

Delivering Sustainable Tourism

Objective 2.1

Promote sustainable travel and leisure choices to reduce private car use for journeys within Devon.

Devon County Council will:

- Develop new opportunities and improve awareness of the sustainable transport opportunities including transport interchanges, clear timetabling information, through ticketing etc;
- Ensure that the walking, cycling and horse riding networks have a good standard of information and interpretation and are effectively promoted and marketed.

Outcomes:

- Effective marketing of the sustainable transport links to cities, market and coastal towns, villages, tourist accommodation and attractions;
- An increased proportion of leisure and tourism visitors making use of public transport and other sustainable activities such as walking, cycling and horse-riding;
- Economic benefits for rural communities by visitors using public transport, walking routes, cycle routes and bridleways.

Objective 2.2

Encourage sustainable business practice to reduce environmental and social impacts and to increase marketing advantage.

Devon County Council will:

- Assist local businesses in achieving an accreditation such as the Green Tourism Business Scheme or the David Bellamy Award;
- Support 'visitor payback' schemes that provide an additional means of contributing to environmental upkeep;
- Develop and promote local facilities, food, drink, and local products inline with the requirements of Destination Devon.

Outcomes:

- A tourism industry aware of sustainability issues and their impacts on the environment;
- Devon known as the destination for sustainable tourism, contributing to its distinctive image and profile;
- Improved competitiveness through increased profits and cost saving.

Theme 3: Driving Up Quality

Objective 3.1

Encourage high quality throughout the tourism sector, quality career opportunities and improved skills standards.

Devon County Council will:

- Encourage and support stakeholders and businesses in continuing to improve the quality of the tourism product;
- Support the continued development of improved skills and career opportunities throughout the tourism sector.

Outcomes:

- Improved customer satisfaction with the quality of the tourism product in Devon;
- Retention of staff and improved recruitment through investment in training and staff development.



Objective 3.2

Improve the quality and diversity of attractions and visitor accommodation.

Devon County Council will:

- Encourage attractions which can demonstrate long-term sustainability and viability;
- Support raising the quality of accommodation and attractions;
- Assess the impact of new developments on local traffic and the need for Visitor Travel Plans;
- Improve access to tourism for all, with a specific focus on visitors with disabilities, ethnic minorities and people who are socially disadvantaged.

Outcomes:

- High standards of existing visitor attractions and where suitable, new all-weather attractions, appropriate to the local area, local culture and sustainable transport links;

- A high quality accommodation sector meeting the demands of the market, with a reduction, where needed, in the amount of outdated and poor quality accommodation;
- Tourism facilities in Devon which are “welcoming” to all.

Theme 4: Supporting Effective Destination Management

Objective 4.1

Continue the development of Devon’s tourism infrastructure provision and improvements to the public realm.

Devon County Council will:

- Continue the development and maintenance of the County’s well-established strategic walking network and National Cycle Network (NCN) and investigate similar opportunities for horse-riders;
- Encourage improvements to the public realm infrastructure including visitor information, toilets, car parks etc.;
- Contribute to improvements in the built environment and environmental management e.g. recycling.

Outcomes:

- A safe, efficient and easy to use sustainable transport network for visitors;
- Numerous tourist attractions and large accommodation providers with green travel initiatives;
- A wide range of opportunities for tourist activities throughout the year.

Objective 4.2

Conserve and enhance Devon’s natural resources and culture.

Devon County Council will:

- Promote sustainable development and carefully manage access to sensitive areas;
- Maintain local distinctiveness, cultural assets and traditions;



Totnes

- Continue to support the work undertaken in the three UNESCO designated sites and five AONBs, including:
 - promoting the delivery of Jurassic Coast Visitor Centres in East Devon, and
 - supporting Morwellham Quay as a key interpretation centre for the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site.

Outcomes:

- A natural and built environment of the highest quality, enjoyed by visitors with no impact on its intrinsic qualities;
- A maintained and enhanced character and distinctiveness of Devon’s cultural heritage.

Objective 4.3

Mitigate the impact of tourism on climate change and encourage the industry to adapt to the future climate.

Devon County Council will:

- Seek to mitigate the impact of tourism on climate change and encourage adaptation to the predicted changes to Devon’s climate.

Outcomes:

- A reduction in the impact of Devon’s tourism industry on the causes of climate change;
- An industry which is informed, flexible and able to adapt to the changes in weather patterns and tourist behaviour patterns, brought about by a changing climate.

6

Implementation and Review



Beer

Implementing the Action Programme

This document sets out how Devon County Council can make a positive contribution towards sustainable tourism development and forms a major part of this Authority's response to national, regional and local tourism initiatives.

The policy statements set out in this document are intended to influence corporate thinking to ensure that tourism is recognised as a cross-cutting theme relevant to all Directorates. Future decision making and the ongoing operation of the County Council's services should reflect these commitments as far as resources and other practical constraints allow.

To this end, a series of actions and projects are proposed through an annual Action Programme. Where relevant, these actions include initiatives that can be taken forward by a range of the Council's six Directorates. The list of actions is not exhaustive but focuses on new initiatives or significant ongoing activities and is intended to cover a wide range of the County Council's services and functions.

It is important that this document is used to inspire staff throughout the County Council to become involved to a greater extent in actions which support tourism.

Required Resources

The resources needed to achieve this work – both in terms of direct expenditure and human resources – will be derived from internal budgets and supplemented, as far as possible, through external funding opportunities.

Current Level of DCC Resources for Tourism (as at April 2008):

Specialist staff: 1.6 fte - Economy Team, 1 fte - Countryside Team = 2.6 fte's.

Also support for tourism delivery from staff within Northern Devon Coast and Countryside Service, Country Parks, AONB and World Heritage Teams.

Annual ongoing expenditure from revenue budgets for project delivery: £340k approx

Capital projects: £30k plus ad hoc Local Transport Plan contributions

Implementation through Partnership

This Role and Action Programme defines a specific role for Devon County Council in pursuing tourism objectives. However, it is recognised that considerable added value can sometimes be achieved through partnership working, involving a sharing of resources, expertise and responsibilities. Partnership working is seen as a key part in planning for truly sustainable tourism.

For the Tourism Role and Action Programme 2008 - 2011 to be truly effective, the four policy themes identified above must dovetail together providing an integrated, well-managed approach to tourism. The Implementation of this action programme will involve a multitude of partners each with an essential role in the effective management of tourism across the county, these include:

- Devon DMO
- South West Regional Development Agency
- South West Tourism
- Future Footprints
- Tourism Businesses
- Local Communities
- Environmental agencies e.g. Natural England and the Environment Agency
- Education and training providers
- Business Link
- Learning and Skills Council

In developing the new destination management structures throughout the life of this strategy, it is essential that the new Devon DMO maintains active engagement with the County Council and other tourism partners.



Monitoring and review

Achievement against action needs to be monitored to justify the expenditure of resources and enable new actions to be taken forward. This document's Action Programme will be reviewed annually, with this review informing the development of the following year's programme. Each new annual Action Plan will include a summary of the previous year's achievements (as far as possible, given that the Action Programme will need to be developed before the end of each financial year) and both of these elements will be approved by the lead Executive Member. The Environment, Economy & Culture Directorate's Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be likely to maintain an ongoing interest in the RAP.

Annex 1 - SWOT Analysis

It is useful to look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Devon's tourism industry in order to identify the issues for the Plan period 2008 – 2011. The top ten issues are listed below.

Strengths

- A well-established visitor destination distant yet easily accessible from major urban centres.
- Two stunning and varied coastlines totalling over 250 miles / 400 kms with 16 of the finest 'award-winning' beaches.
- A number of major estuaries important for both wildlife and recreation.
- Distinctive countryside with high landscape value and well-maintained Rights of Way network.
- 50% of the county covered by nature conservation and landscape designations including two National Parks and five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Three international (UNESCO) sites – North Devon's Biosphere Reserve and parts of the Dorset and East Devon Coast and Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Sites.
- Innovative public transport routes linking market and coastal towns and recreational routes.
- Wide range of cultural tourism opportunities including events and festivals.
- More GTBS members than any other county in England.
- Quality locally produced food and drink and more organic food producers than any other county in England.

Weaknesses

- Perceived lack of value for money, especially when compared with overseas holidays.
- Winter closures of accommodation and facilities.
- Fragmented nature of the tourism industry.
- Varied and inconsistent standards and service in accommodation and attractions.
- Mismatch between supply and demand of quality accommodation.
- Resorts with poor infrastructure and struggling enterprises with an over-reliance on tourism
- Unpredictable weather patterns.

- Lack of wet-weather facilities and attractions offering value for money.
- Congestion on routes to Devon in certain locations and lack of public transport to visitor attractions in rural areas.
- Perception of tourism as a poor career choice.

Opportunities

- Streamlining of tourism management through the Devon DMO and growth in recognition of the Devon Brand.
- Growth in special interest and activity holidays and improved infrastructure for walking and cycling.
- Growth in environmental interests and concerns.
- External funding for new tourism projects.
- Rural diversification into tourism
- Cultural tourism including events, festivals, carnivals, regattas, music, adventure sports.
- The 2012 Olympics.
- Linked trips and collaborated thematic marketing with Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset.
- Increase in the cost of budget flights redirecting tourists to UK destinations.
- Changes to the climate abroad, including extreme temperatures, leading to increased tourism to the UK.

Threats

- On-going growth in competition from both overseas and other UK destinations.
- High level of competition for disposable income from DIY and leisure activities and fluctuations in the global economy.
- Continued rise in traffic levels and congestion.
- Labour supply and skills shortages in the tourism industry and associated sectors.
- Low occupancy rates in some accommodation.
- Lack of major capital investment in tourism.
- Stagnation of 'main season' holidays.
- The 2012 Olympics – high prices, overcrowding and the disruption to holiday patterns.
- Economic viability of TICs is threatened by the increase in use of ICT.
- Unforeseen external factors such as animal disease and the grounding of the MSC Napoli.

Annex 2 - The Devon DMO



The creation of a Destination Management Organisation was instigated by a regional review on the shape of tourism for the Regional Strategy 'Towards 2015'. In the South West, the responsibility for delivering 'what visitors want' is divided amongst many organisations – county, district and local area tourism organisations, marketing bureaus and tourism associations. The result is a degree of overlap and waste, at a time when Local Authority budgets are, and likely to remain, under increasing pressure. 'Towards 2015' envisages the creation of a leaner, more cost-effective and efficient structure across the region, with bodies working together more closely under the umbrella of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) which will merge and streamline many of the activities currently undertaken by individual organisations. The creation of a Devon DMO is supported by South West Tourism and the South West Regional Development Agency. It will be a fresh approach to tourism, leading to a substantial realignment of structures at a sub-regional level.

The DMO activities will include building development strategies for destinations, providing a point of contact and support for the private sector at sub-regional level, marketing, research, and providing ICT and e-tourism services. Marketing activity will be focused on key destination 'attack brands' – those destination brands that are recognised by potential visitors and have the greatest potential for generating a response, enquiries and bookings from non-visitors and long-lapsed visitors. There will be complementary strategies

and plans to retain existing customers and recent lapsed customers.

The Devon DMO, is known as 'Destination Devon', is a company limited by guarantee and has a Board of Directors, a Management Forum and a Chief Executive.

Devon has been divided into 6 unique Area Tourism Partnerships (ATPs). These are based mainly around geographical areas and sub-divide Devon so that liaison can happen on a local level under the umbrella of a Devon-wide destination management organisation. This will ensure that local businesses have a clearer channel of communication and a stronger partnership approach towards the delivery of tourism in their local areas. However the emphasis of localness will be coupled with the over-reaching DMO structure that will provide back-up in research, expertise, training and IT, marketing, etc. ATPs consist of both public bodies, tourism organisations and tourism providers whose key aims are to provide a streamline, effective delivery of front-line activity to the consumer whilst supplying a solid and supportive partnership to local businesses.

For more information about Destination Devon, please visit

www.destination-devon.com



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Further information about the work undertaken by the Culture Group can be found in the following publications:



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