

# PLYMOUTH VISITOR PLAN 2020 TO 2030

## Briefing Report



### 1.0 Current situation

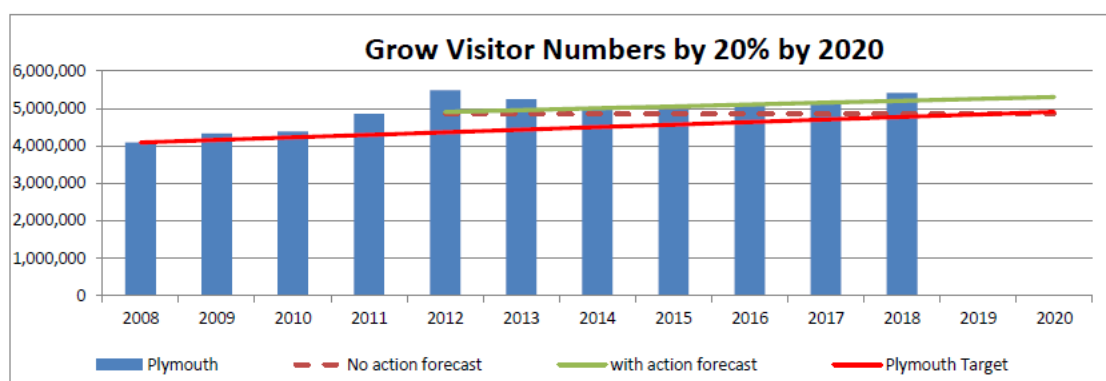
The key strategic objectives within the existing 2010 to 2020 visitor Plan are:

- To grow visitor numbers by 20% by 2020 and visitor spend by 25% - that means 800,000 additional visitors and that visitor spend will rise by £63m from nearly £252m to £315m
- To create and sustain 4,000 new jobs in the visitor economy by 2026 – a 33% increase on current numbers
- To increase GVA by £84.4 million
- To strengthen Plymouth's position as the regional centre for Devon & Cornwall – by creating a great day out and evening destination
- To raise the profile of Plymouth and its positioning as a place to visit and invest - particularly focusing on its outstanding marine credentials
- To generate demand for more places to eat and drink, distinctive independent shops, quality places to stay and an exceptional cultural offer that local people and visitors can enjoy

The achievements as a city compared to targets are significant, including:

#### Grow visitor numbers by 20%

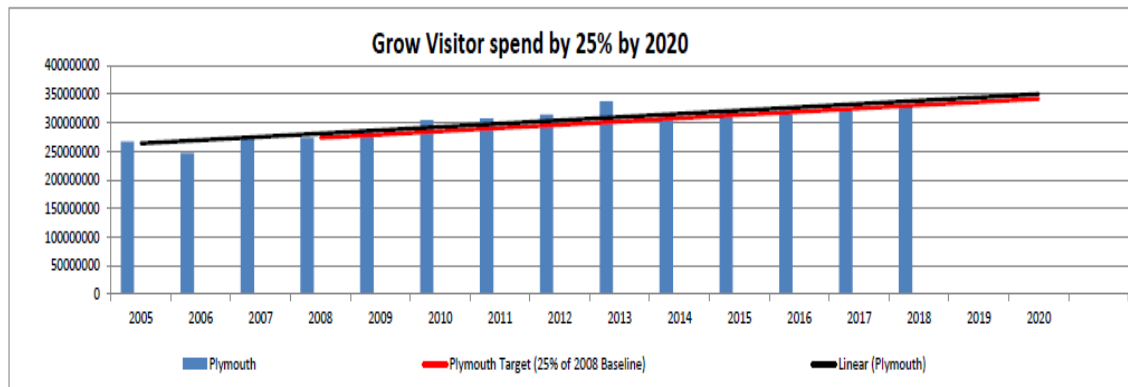
- Baseline (2008) = 4.093 million. Actual to 2018 = 5.4 million
- Plymouth has grown its visitor numbers by 25.9%



#### Grow visitor spend by 25%

- Baseline (2008) = £273,731,000. Actual to 2018 = £330,748,333
- Plymouth has grown its visitor spend by c.25%

Key: the blue coloured bars in above graph graphically represent 'Actual' figures.



#### Grow jobs by 2,800

- Baseline (2008) = 4,495. Actual to 2016 = 7,985
- Plymouth has grown the number of jobs by 3,490

#### Grow GVA by £84 million

- Baseline (2008) = £208m. Actual = 261m (2018 latest figures)
- Plymouth has grown its GVA by £53m
- Anticipate future increases - as still 2 years until 2020 data received

In addition, the original 2011 visitor plan included a five-year rolling business plan and marketing plan with the following headline actions and 'star projects'.

#### Star projects:

- A signature and major events programme to draw in day visitors from across the region
- Development of Commercial Wharf into a used public space
- Royal William Yard to be developed as a visitor destination
- 'Telling Stories' a project to develop and promote our heritage assets, public realm, gateways and city walking trails.

#### High level headline actions:

- Destination marketing
- Accommodation development
- Visitor welcome
- Business tourism
- Skills development
- Evaluation and monitoring

Star projects have been particularly successful and have been largely delivered already or will be delivered by 2020. The commentary below explains progress:

Events – Plymouth now has had a very strong events programme punctuated by nationally significant events including MTV Presents, British Fireworks, Armed Forces Day, FlavourFest, and key sporting

events including Transat, La Solitaire du Figaro, British Diving Championships and British Swimming Masters. Plymouth Culture has grown from strength to strength over the past five years and in 2017 helped to enable NPO's across the city to bid for Arts Council Funding of over £18 million for four years to develop the underpinning cultural infrastructure of the city as we move towards 2020.

Commercial Wharf and Royal William Yard have both been successfully re-developed with the Commercial Wharf area now a thriving café and boat trips attraction led by private sector investment. Royal William Yard has been developed by Urban Splash and has become a chic mini-destination of offices, restaurants, cafes and bars in its own right, coupled with a quirky programme of artisan food markets, open-air theatre and cinema amongst many of the regular activities and café culture.

The Tourist Information Centre and associated Mayflower Visitor Centre on the Barbican continue [with a](#) 3-storey museum with interactive displays about merchant life, the fishing industry and the harbour. There was a c. £15,000 refurbishment by the City Council in 2015. There has been a strong increase in visitor numbers over the last few years, potentially due the current temporary closure of the city museum (ahead of the opening of The Box).

The 'Telling Stories' project has many facets and is currently in delivery with the aim of being completed by 2020. The project comprises three heritage trails, refurbishment of the Elizabethan House and reimagining of the public realm in the Mayflower Steps area through both physical and digital attributes. Linked into this will be the impressive 'The Box' project, which will provide a step change in the visitor offer in the city and long overdue revitalisation of the former city museum, galleries and records offices.

The headline actions for marketing activities included targeting local and regional day-trippers, developing staying and overnight visits, and focusing on the East coast of the USA as part of the build up to Mayflower 400 in 2020. As part of the initial work, the Britain's Ocean City branding was developed and there has been significant success in growing the reach of the city's marketing activities helped by £1 million of Visit England and government grant funding over the past two year for Mayflower 400. This has resulted in the following statistics:

Website visits:	2013 - Unique visitors 522,376; Page views 1,856,618
	2017 - Unique visitors 573,808; Page views 1,876,140
	2018 – Unique visitors 533,889; Page views 1,641,615
	2019 – Unique visitors 580,785; Page views 1,697,224

#### Social media:

Visit Plymouth	2014 - Facebook 5.4k, Twitter 6.6k
	2018 - Facebook 10.6k, Twitter 13.5k
	2019 – Facebook 11k, Twitter, 14.8k, Instagram 3.7k

What's On	2014 - Facebook 31.7k, Twitter 1.4k
	2018 - Facebook 60.4k, Twitter 6.1k

2019 Facebook 63k, Twitter 7.4k

#### PR Impact:

AVE / Reach - 2013 – AVE - £2.1m; Reach: 118k

2017 – AVE - £2.7m; Reach 156k

#### International and US marketing activity:

Audience reach £728 million (trade), £17 million (AVE) PR reach. Working with Visit Britain, we have used Mayflower 400 to target the international travel trade marketing focusing on the production of various itineraries. Over the past 12 months, a further £96,700 has been secured on top of the £700,000 from the Discover England Fund to support this activity as part of the US Connections project which Plymouth is leading on. Outputs from these activities to date include development of 35 bookable tours, 5 travel trade partners appointed to distribute in the USA, development of a 132 page trade directory and relationships with over 400 tour operators in the US This has led to numerous tours and bookings totalling over £2 million to date.

#### Cruise activity:

In addition, work commenced in 2017 to develop the cruise market driven by long-term aspiration to become a key cruise port in the South West and to grow cruise visits, which had declined to zero over the years. Early activities in 2017 and 2018 have been successful with 4 cruise liners booked in 2018, 5 in 2019 and 12 to date in 2020 bringing approximately 15,000 passengers.

A key focus in the original plan was to grow better quality and a wider range of accommodation bed stock to support growth in the staying and international visitor markets and to encourage visits from higher spending visitor groups.

A hotel demand study was commissioned in 2014 and repeated in 2019 which demonstrated demand in the market; this was subsequently taken to market by the City Council later that year. Currently there are two hotels being built (Derrys Premier Inn (110 rooms), Coxside Premier Inn) and a 9 bed boutique hotel has recently opened in Royal William Yard. A number of other hotel developments are in the pipeline and are in the process of being brought forward including Millbay, Pavilions car park and railway station sites.

Visitor welcome activities have been predominantly supported by PCC and include continuing to operate the tourist information centre in the Barbican, improving key gateways such as Bretonside coach station being moved to Mayflower Street, the railway station which is currently being brought forward as a major hub regeneration project, cruise terminal and key city gateways such as Exeter Street.

## 2.0 Current funding

Destination Plymouth Ltd. currently receives £150,000 per annum from PCC, which is within existing revenue budgets, as part of the overall Mayflower 400 contribution of £2.25 million from 2017 to Mar 2021.

Other income based on 2019 figures is broken down as follows;

City Centre Company £50,000 per annum  
Plymouth Waterfront Partnership £10,000 per annum  
University of Plymouth £50,000 per annum  
Memberships £17,000 per annum (net)  
Marketing £20,182 per annum  
Mayflower 400 activities £330,315  
Discover England £343,000  
Cruise £25,000  
Total: c.£845,497

This income supports the executive team and delivery of key projects linked into specific grant funding including Discover England Fund and Mayflower 400.

### 2.1 Leverage:

As part of the overall partnership approach, PCC also contributes event and non-event specific income (totalling c. £0.93m in 2017/18) towards marketing and events activities via the economic development events and marketing team. This supports events such as Lord Mayors Day, Bonfire Night, Armed Forces Day, Ocean City Sounds, Fireworks, and the Blues n' Jazz Festival.

The Destination Plymouth team is also hosted at City Council offices in Ballard House.

Grants funding has also successfully been secured over the past three years including:

2016 £500,000 Treasury funding via Visit England for MF400 International marketing  
2016 £500,000 Treasury funding via Arts Council for cultural programming  
2017 £500,000 Discover England Grant funding for international marketing (+ £200,000 in kind)  
2018 £700,000 Art of the Possible cultural programme  
2017 £88,000 Discover England Grant funding for cruise marketing  
2018 £250,000 DCMS funding for MF400 international marketing  
2018 £10,000 General Society of Mayflower descendants for MF400 trails/monument

2018 £60,000 Community Rail Partnership for MF400 trails  
2018 £10,000 Pilgrim Trust for Elizabethan House  
2018 £50,000 from Heritage England for Elizabethan House  
2018 £140,000 from HLF for Elizabethan House (part of 2 stage grant of £650,000)  
2018 £200,000 Founders Club for MF400 marketing activity  
2018 £51,000 Plymouth Argyll Trust for MF400 sporting programme (in kind)  
2018 £70,000 Arts Council for Cultural producer  
2018 £68,000 Arts Council for Illuminate and misc. projects (in kind)  
2019 £3,500,000 iMayflower Cultural Development Fund project  
2019 £550,000 Illuminate Funding from ACE (secured by RIO)  
2019 £58,000 Heritage Trails Engagement Co-ordinator from HLF

To date, excluding sponsorship and commercial income, Mayflower 400 has generated additional funding valued at £7.7m. Further income valued at over £1m is anticipated, including the NLHF 2<sup>nd</sup> Round application for the Elizabethan House and further match funding into the cultural programme.

It is worth highlighting that this represents significant leverage on City Council funding.

### 3.0 New visitor plan

The report brought to scrutiny in August 2018 highlighted the significance of tourism and the visitor economy as a key sector in the city. A headline strategy has now been written and was agreed by council in March 2019.

The strategy has a vision, which supports the wider City vision:

*“Plymouth is Britain’s Ocean City, famous for its Waterfront. We will be one of Europe’s finest waterfront cities, celebrated for our unique and diverse marine life, culture and experiences. We will continue to be recognised as unique among UK cities for our natural drama and 500-year history as a place of embarkation and exploration. “*

A number of strategic ambitions support the vision:

1. *‘Our national marine park will be globally recognised for amazing experiences, by, on, in and under the ocean...’*

2. *‘We will become one of the UK’s first carbon neutral destinations by 2030 supporting our city vision’..*

3. *'We will be known internationally for jaw dropping art, authentic cultural experiences and our urban spirit..'*
4. *'We will have transport infrastructure to match our ambition, with seamless connectivity to international arrival hubs and be known for our water transport services...'*
5. *'We will be recognised nationally as best in class for our digital, creative and cultural approach in everything we do...'*
6. *'Plymouth will be known nationally as a UK top ten city break...'*
7. *'We will be renowned as the #1 must do destination in Devon & Cornwall....'*
8. *'We will be known as the destination of choice for meetings, events and conferences in Devon and Cornwall....'*

The strategy has three key themes:

- Blue-green city
- Brilliant Culture and heritage
- Premier Destination

And is underpinned by a series of enabling activities including:

- Partnerships
- People
- Ocean city infrastructure
- Our distinctive brand

There are a number of 'emerging' new star projects, which have been identified within the new Visitor plan linked to each of the three themes. These strategic interventions will make a 'step change' in how we deliver versus our targets and our ambitions.

### 3.1 Star Projects:

Currently there are 9 star project concepts which are being explored these are set out below:

Theme: Blue-green city

- i. Ocean playground

Our aims is to build on our waterfront assets by providing access all year round for activities by, on, in and under the water. Key projects include Mountbatten Watersports Centre and the Hoe Foreshore

ii. Stories of the Ocean – National Marine Park

Our national marine park will be recognised for amazing experiences. Using innovative digital technology, marine science and our local people to tell our story. Integrating culture into city centre and waterfront developments to expand the use of digital technologies to animate the city and its heritage assets

iii. National Marine Park Gateway

The National Marine Aquarium is a much loved and nationally significant visitor attraction. This project will ensure that the attraction is sustainable for the long term in its role as Ocean conservation trust and develop the site as a gateway to the National Marine Park. Connected projects will explore the opportunity to develop the fish market to make it more accessible for the local community as well as visitors.

Theme: Brilliant Culture and heritage

i. 'The Box' effect

Build on the legacy potential of the Box by working with creative talent and communities to encourage new audiences and explore other heritage, leisure and arts activities in the city.

ii. 'Après Sea- developing Plymouth's night time economy

Grow our evening, musical and cultural community events and assets from grass roots to larger venues to build a distinctive day and night time offer which reflects the 'Britain's Ocean City' 'Après-sea' experience and culture of the city

iii. Celebrating our maritime and military heritage

The National Museum of the Royal Navy has recently acquired the Naval heritage Centre in Devonport situated five minutes' walk from Devonport market hall and Guildhall. This emerging cluster of potential visitor attractions has potential to be developed longer term to show case the city's marine and naval heritage

Theme: Premier destination and Ocean infrastructure

i. City conference campus and accommodation

This project will aim to realise the potential of the Civic Centre and Guildhall by developing a city centre conferencing campus to attract small and medium sized conferences, meetings and events to the city. In addition it will support further development of supporting 4 star hotel accommodation and banqueting provision to support growth of business tourism off peak and increase staying visitor capacity.

ii. Brunel Plaza



Although work on this project to re-develop the railway station has commenced it is a long-term project and will have a major impact on the visitor economy providing a significant step change in the experience and efficiency for both locals, commuters and visitors arriving in Plymouth.

### iii. Plymouth cruise and ferry port

This project will see improved capacity for traffic and transport, more streamlined border controls, better accessibility and visitor welcome service for cruise and ferry passengers off both the berth and tendering in. Higher volumes of ships will be achievable through a second smaller berth facility at Trinity Pier, which will also improve the access and ambience of the waterside for visitors and local residents

## 3.2 The strategy also sets out ambitious new targets for the next 10 years:

Our objectives are grounded in **wise clean growth of the value of the visitor economy**. We will focus on high value markets to drive productivity in the sector that can translate into quality, year-round jobs and opportunities for Plymothians. That means international and overnight leisure and business visitors who will visit throughout the year and manifests in our targets which grow value at a faster rate than volumes of visits.

Delivering our refreshed Visitor Plan will generate a further **1,000 new jobs in the city**, bringing employment in tourism to just under 9,000 jobs<sup>1</sup>.

Our targets are:

- To grow visitor spend by 30% from £347 million to £450 million in a decade
- To increase the total visitor numbers by 15% from 5.1 to 6 million by 2030

Here is the market focus for delivering that growth.

- Make international tourism worth £60 million a year spend in the city, that's 65% growth by 2030
- Grow UK staying visits by 25% to achieve £150 million spend, focusing on leisure short breaks
- Make business meetings and conference tourism worth £25 million a year in spend to the city, a 55% increase in a decade, using Plymouth's industry strengths to create a strong positioning

## 3.3 Current status

A three-year rolling business plan to support the Visitor Plan alongside a first draft Marketing Delivery Plan has now been written to support the high level strategy. On August 16<sup>th</sup> 2019 a board away day was held to discuss role, function and structure of Destination Plymouth going forwards as part of the Visitor Plan process. Key points were agreed during the day:

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<sup>1</sup> Actual jobs, using Cambridge data and assuming c.14% increase in jobs between 2020 and 2030.

Moving forward Destination Plymouth should be:

- About place marketing and management
- A flexible organisation
- A strategic organisation
- Lead on work with partners across the city and nationally
- Continue to be known for making things happen
- Look at the national marine park as the next big thing
- Include a representative from Plymouth Culture on the board

Further to this meeting and at the recent DP Board meeting it was agreed that given the priorities of the current senior management capacity during 2020 and in order to evolve the organisation for the longer term an interim business plan for the next 2 to 3 years would be written based on the current structure and functions. This would also include the intent to engage in further conversations citywide during 2021 with a view to developing a longer-term plan from 2022 onwards.

Work is progressing on this basis and a draft will be available in December for the DP Board to review. Key decisions in relation to this will include funding commitments from the main partners from March 2021 onwards. PCC support is crucial in terms of providing leadership and leverage for DP to secure partner commitments.

The main DP funding partners providing core income up to March 2021 are as follows:

Plymouth City Council	£150k per annum
Plymouth Waterfront Partnership	£10k per annum
Plymouth City Centre Company	£50k per annum
University of Plymouth	£50k per annum
Total	£260k per annum

Other strategic decisions, which the Board has taken include:

- Star projects – a framework is now in place to take these forward
- Marketing approach and strategy
- A commitment to the baseline funding required for delivery of activities
- Agreement on the operational structure for delivery post March 2021

Plymouth faces some key challenges, which the refreshed Visitor Plan will aim to address. These include:

- Low productivity and wages (linked to seasonality)
- Low average spend per visitor due to high % of day visitors
- Static numbers of overnight and staying visitors linked to capacity of accommodation offer
- In addition, the impact of Brexit on Plymouth's visitor economy will need to be considered across a diverse range of potential Brexit scenarios.

Key opportunities for Plymouth include:

- Growing visitor numbers in shoulder seasons (period between peak and off-peak seasons) through conferencing/meetings and targeting key markets
- Continue to develop accommodation offer
- Grow overseas visitors through international activity
- Positioning Plymouth as key destination in UK within Cornwall/Devon holiday offer
- Building on the legacy from the Mayflower 400 programme
- Establish Britain's first Marine National Park

#### **4.0 Visitor Plan wider context**

4.1 There was a clear need to refresh the Visitor Plan in the light of an evolving marketplace, the significant progress against the existing plan, and new opportunities arising, including how best to capitalise on the Mayflower 400 legacy, and the proposal to establish the UK's first Marine National Park. This has enabled us to set into place new objectives projects and aspirations for the city to progress towards.

The objectives of developing a refreshed Visitor Plan included:

- Reviewing progress against existing visitor plan targets and key success factors
- Diagnosing and addressing the opportunities/issues facing growth in the sector, wider 'place marketing' challenges and establish a clear direction for the further development of Plymouth as a destination
- Engaging with key partners across the city to define key priorities, projects and assets that will help drive visitor growth
- Clearly articulating a renewed vision for the future outlining the roles and structures of governance required to effectively drive success
- Exploring how to effectively engage and exploit other city marketing activities to the benefit of the overall 'Britain's Ocean City' branding and proposition
- Identifying how best to invest limited funding and resources in improvements to the visitor offer and marketing effort

4.3 The Board of Destination Plymouth have been keen to bring together different groups with wider interests to engage in the development of the new Visitor Plan strategy and explore particular themes more deeply. This has been particularly effective in engaging conversations relating to the evolution of the National Marine Park, cultural and creative sectors who are becoming increasingly supportive of the overall approach.

4.4 The refreshed Visitor Plan headline document sets out a vision, clear priorities and a rationale. A business plan has now been developed which identifies headline actions against a timeline for

delivery and targets, what needs to be done, who and how it will happen and which stakeholders will be involved. The headline plan does the following:

- Sets the level of ambition for the next 10 years, underpinned by a market led rationale.
- Articulates how the city's culture, heritage and environment can be used to drive the visitor economy in terms of market opportunities as well as delivery.
- Identifies how we will maximise the legacy of Mayflower 400 over the next 5-10 years, requiring a stronger marketing focus.
- Is a short, outward looking document, to enable it to be widely used by all interested parties and willingly shared with external partners. The strategy will be developed into a prospectus in early 2020 which will be easy to read with plenty of graphics and imagery as accessible as possible and easy to update.
- Includes detailed action plans sitting behind the strategy, for example on culture, heritage, environment and marketing. These plans will take the relevant priorities and set out key actions and responsibilities, identifying resources and funding. The action plans should provide opportunities to engage with wider audiences, partners and industry wide organisations.

#### 4.5 There are some key challenges which the refreshed Visitor Plan aims to address:

- Productivity (and wages) – affected by local and regional seasonality
- Low spend per visitor – 85% of visitors are day visitors
- Low number of overseas and staying visitors – 15% overseas, 14% staying

#### 4.6 Considerations – National/International Context

The new Visitor Plan also considers our local visitor economy in relation to wider impacts both nationally and internationally. From a national perspective tourism is one of the fastest growing employment sectors providing 9.6% of employment and £126.9 billion GDP (\*2013 figs.). It is predicted that Britain will have a tourism industry worth over £257 billion by 2025 – just under 10% of UK GDP and supporting almost 3.8 million jobs, which is around 11% of the total UK number. The sector is predicted to grow at an annual rate of 3.8% through to 2025 - significantly faster than the overall UK economy (with a predicted annual rate of 3% per annum) and much faster than sectors such as manufacturing, construction and retail.

Globally Inbound tourism will continue to be the fastest growing tourism sector – with spend by international visitors forecast to grow by over 6% a year in comparison with domestic spending by UK residents at just over 3%. It is therefore important to consider these when targeting marketing activity to ensure that we are aligned with Britain's strategic tourism objectives and as well as maximising any opportunities this may offer including grant funding and policy support.

In particular, the following will be significant over the next 12 months and in the immediate post Brexit period:

- Brexit – post exit impacts on currency and EU workers/ease of access to inbound visitors will affect visitors as well as businesses
- Industrial Strategy –tourism has been recognised within the new industrial strategy with a sector deal, only one of 10 sectors nationally to be approved. Following the government's comprehensive spending review in early 2020 it is hoped that allocated funding to support the strategy is identified and opportunities maximised where possible
- Growing inbound tourism (global macro) – Globally, tourism is set to continue to grow, with the value of inbound tourism forecast to grow from over £21bn in 2013 to £57bn

by 2025, with the UK seeing an international tourism balance of payments surplus in 2023, almost forty years since the UK last reported a surplus

- Visit Britain tourism strategy – A new strategy was launched in 2020 and the Visitor Plan will support some of these high-level national aims.
  - Grow the value of tourism
  - Drive the dispersal of tourism value across Britain
  - Support productivity optimisation
  - Be the expert body on growing tourism
  - Deliver a clear strategy for England

#### 4.8 Local /regional context and considerations

As part of the process of reviewing the current strategy, we have considered wider regional strategies and factors which may affect our decision making or which we may wish to be influenced by the refreshed strategy and our ambitions.

- Local Economic Strategy – this is also currently being reviewed and can be updated by our emerging new visitor plan
- LEP review and current strategy – we are working hard to embed tourism as a key enabler and growth sector within the regions LIS
- Great South West region – we are working with regional colleagues to develop a tourism vision for the future of tourism in the Great South West
- Culture/creative industries strategy – currently in development – it will be important to align this with our new visitor plan to ensure we maximise impact and resources
- Infrastructure – what are the current projects, which will be completed as Mayflower legacy, and what are the emerging new projects, which should be highlighted as key city developments over the next 10 years?
- Business community – engagement and consultation with our local business community has been and continues to be crucial to ensure the success of the new visitor plan as a shared leadership, shared delivery model
- City aspirations – in the current visitor plan Mayflower 400 has acted as an incredibly successful and very powerful catalyst and its legacy will continue well beyond 2020. Part of the process of refreshing the plan will explore how we capitalise on Mayflower projects and what we can use going forward as the next milestone in the development of the city as a major international visitor destination.

#### 4.9 Process

The work to develop a new Visitor Plan commenced in late 2018 and initial consultation took place across the whole city with the business and local community to develop a high level strategy which was taken to Cabinet in March 2019. The business plan supporting this high level Visitor plan is now complete and a supporting marketing plan will be available by end of March 2020.

As part of the Visitor Plan work there has been a high level of engagement in the development of the City Centre Company BID Business Plan for the next 5 years in order to 'lock in' support and funding from this organisation for DP. PWP will support at the current level up to the BID renewal in 2022, however, it is proposed that they are asked to contribute at a higher rate to reflect the nature of benefits to the waterfront as a whole pre-ballot.

The marketing plan is being developed through engagement with the Plymouth marketing leaders group: a workshop took place on October 18<sup>th</sup> 2019 and this input is being used to develop the plan with completion expected March 2020.

A skills and employability action plan is being developed with the city hospitality forum which includes City College and the University amongst other key stakeholders. A first draft has now been written and will be complete end of March 2020.

Work is also being undertaken with the National Marine Park and natural infrastructure team to embed environmental principles and policies across the plan as well as ensuring key projects are highlighted.

It is anticipated that there will be a formal public launch of the complete set of documents in June 2020.