

## CITY OF PLYMOUTH

**Subject:** Visitor Plan for Plymouth  
**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 15 November 2011  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Fry  
**CMT Member:** Director for Development and Regeneration  
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**Ref:** PM/Democratic/CabinetReport13.09.11  
**Key Decision:** Yes  
**Part:** 1

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### Executive Summary:

The Local Economic Strategy 2006-2021 and Beyond (LES) identifies the visitor economy (Tourism and Culture) as a priority growth sector which has the potential to generate 7,000 additional jobs over the next ten years. Tourism is a significant industry in Devon and Cornwall and this has been recognised in the heart of the South West (HotSW) LEP prospectus. The Visitor Plan is a key component of the implementation of the LES; setting out a framework for realising the potential of Plymouth's visitor economy to 2026.

The City Council's newly created Economic Development Service has a defined responsibility to support the economic development of the visitor economy i.e. tourism, leisure, hospitality and retail sectors (through Place Management). These sectors support over 30,000 jobs and remain an important part of Plymouth's economy with 3.5m day visitors and 2.4m staying visitors spending £252m per annum.

In April 2010 the City Council approved the Place Management Strategy, which gave Destination Plymouth (DP) responsibility for driving the City's visitor economy.

DP decided that the City needed a Visitor Plan to determine Plymouth's potential as a visitor destination and set out aspirations and the direction of travel to 2026. It has prepared the Visitor Plan using Blue Sail, specialist destination consultants, who consulted widely with visitor economy businesses and other stakeholders.

The City Council is asked to approve the Visitor Plan to ensure that its resources are effectively aligned and that there is a coherent framework for DP's detailed delivery plans, which includes a business plan, marketing plan and an events plan.

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### Corporate Plan 2011-2014:

Through partnership with Destination Plymouth, the City Council will attract more visitors and visitor spend, increasing the number of jobs within the visitor economy, encouraging enterprise, improving skills and making Plymouth a thriving regional centre. Destination Plymouth will work closely with the City Council to ensure land, property and transport infrastructure is in place to support growth and that jobs and wealth targets are met.

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**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:  
Including finance, human, IT and land**

The City Council will continue to support Destination Plymouth at current levels of agreed funding and contribution in kind. DP will develop new private sector streams and sponsorship to deliver the Visitor Plan improvements and marketing activity. The City Council will support the development of visitor economy-led site opportunities and facilitate inward investment.

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**Other Implications: e.g. Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:**

None. Destination Plymouth, working with the City Centre Company and Plymouth Waterfront Partnership, will continue to ensure that its activities support these objectives.

**Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:**

It is recommended that:

- 1) The City Council approve the Visitor Plan to be led and coordinated by Destination Plymouth and delivered in partnership with Plymouth City Council and other city stakeholders.
- 2) Approve development of European, Heritage Lottery Fund and other required bids to deliver the Visitor Plan.

**Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:**

The alternative is to not approve the Visitor Plan, which would reduce Destination Plymouth's ability to deliver the Plan and so threaten the creation of additional jobs and economic growth.

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**Background papers:**

Draft Plymouth Visitor Plan

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**Sign off:**

Fin	<b>DevF11 120038</b>	Leg	<b>DVS 13247</b>	HR		Corp Prop		IT		StratProc	
Originating SMT Member											

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.0 In April 2010 the City Council approved the Place Management Strategy, which gave Destination Plymouth responsibility for driving the City's visitor economy.

1.2 Destination Plymouth are developing a citywide Visitor Plan to determine Plymouth's potential as a visitor destination and set out aspirations and the direction of travel to 2026. Destination Plymouth has prepared the Visitor Plan using Blue Sail, specialist destination consultants who have advised other destinations, including Liverpool, Cardiff and the Isles of Scilly, on how to grow their visitor economy. This Plan has been developed through a robust process of consultation, analysis and assessment, engaging a wide range of visitor economy businesses and other stakeholders, and endorsement by the Growth Board.

1.3 Destination Plymouth, along with the City Centre Company and Plymouth Waterfront Partnership, will work closely with the Economic Development Service to deliver the Visitor Plan through a 5 year business plan. This will include developing new additional private sector streams and sponsorship to deliver improvements and marketing activity.

1.4 The Visitor Plan responds to the city's Growth Strategy recognizing tourism as a priority sector. It will promote opportunities to positively raise the profile of the city in the UK and internationally, encourage spend and generate jobs and inward investment. It also plays a role in securing Plymouth's status as the regional city of Devon and Cornwall. These drivers have influenced the levels of ambition and priorities for the Visitor Plan.

1.5 The Visitor Plan is ambitious, though deliverable, but needs a bold response to make things happen. The Council has an opportunity to lead the way and set the pace of change by demonstrating a step change in approach and strongly supporting Destination Plymouth to kick start delivery. This is about wisely committing resources - people, time, skills and budgets - to deliver the plan and importantly to seize opportunity, help nurture partnerships and lever in additional partner funding and sponsorship.

1.6 Destination Plymouth, supported by the City Council, will ask everyone involved in the visitor economy to get behind this Plan support it and take a role in making it happen.

1.7 The Visitor Plan provides a coherent framework for DP's detailed delivery plans, which includes a business plan, marketing plan and an events plan.

1.8 The funding structure involves aligning existing City Council resources behind the Visitor Plan; working closely with the private sector, whilst also securing grants, sponsorship and revenue.

## **2.0 Visitor Plan**

2.1 The Visitor Plan sets out a vision that reflects Plymouth's unique offer as a marine and Waterfront city, that is distinct from the rural and coastal experience that surrounds it:

- By 2020, Plymouth will be the UK's premier marine city and famous for its Waterfront. It will be recognised as unique among UK cities for its natural drama and for its 500-year old history of embarkation and exploration. Plymouth's continuing journey towards a world-leading marine city will support the cultural experiences it offers to visitors who are looking for authenticity and character.

The Visitor Plan recommends that Plymouth lead the growth of the visitor economy with its Waterfront and culture. Destination Plymouth will profile this distinct personality and make sure visitors understand what Plymouth stands for and what it offers. Culture and heritage will be integral part of the experience, highly visible to the visitor and part of the reason they choose to visit Plymouth.

The Visitor Plan asserts that the Waterfront is the city's strongest visitor asset and must be the showcase for the very best of Plymouth and all it stands for. However the City must deliver an all-round urban experience which also depends on an excellent city centre. In addition, the city needs to make more of its links to its green spaces.

This supports the City's existing overarching vision, focused on the development of the visitor offer.

The Visitor Plan's approach is as follows:

- Be clear about the visitor markets that offer best prospects and how we will reach them
- Be clear about why people should visit Plymouth, and how to create great experiences
- Focus single-mindedly on those actions that will deliver the best return on investment
- Deliver a small number of star projects that will set the standard and concentrate on making them happen to the highest quality.

## **2.3 Objectives and Targets**

The Visitor Plan sets out ambitious targets, reflecting the scale of the opportunity to drive visitor spend, new jobs and inward investment.

### **2.4 Visitor Plan targets:**

- 25% increase in visitor spend by 2020. This means annual visitor spend will rise by £63m from nearly £252m to £315m - achieved through increasing numbers of visits and diversification into new visitor markets including growing Plymouth's share of day visits and city short breaks.
- 4,000 new jobs in the visitor economy by 2026. The Visitor Plan targets deliver of 2,800 of these new jobs by 2020. (The LES is targeting additional jobs through other activities designed to secure a total of 7,000 jobs within the visitor economy). These jobs will largely be created across the hospitality, retail, leisure and accommodation sectors.
- To increase GVA by £84.4m.

### **2.5 Through delivery of improved visitor experience and marketing, the Visitor Plan will also:**

- Raise Plymouth's national profile as a Waterfront city – through targeted PR, new events and activities.
- Strengthen Plymouth's position as the regional centre for Devon & Cornwall – creating a great day out and evening destination
- Raise the profile of Plymouth and its positioning as a place to visit and invest - particularly focusing on its outstanding marine credentials.
- Encourage new SMEs by generating 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.
- Create opportunities to lever in more private sector sponsorship to support visitor marketing activity and for major and signature events.

- Everyone involved in the visitor economy needs to get behind the Visitor Plan, support it and take a role in making it happen.

## 2.6 Star Projects

The Visitor Plan identifies a small number of 'star projects' that will inspire visitors to come, help get Plymouth talked about and enrich the city's distinctiveness. The projects must each be well designed and executed to a high quality.

### 2.7 Star Project (1) - Signature Events

The Plan underlines the potential for new and existing 'signature' events to raise the profile of Plymouth, underline key messages and deliver more visitors and spend.

Signature events are developed by the City that hosts them (e.g. Edinburgh Festival) and purposively designed to reinforce the City's brand, as opposed to major events that are brought in, often at high cost, no longevity or have questionable return.

Building on the legacy of the America's Cup and British Art Show, it recommends the development of three signature events that will be based on the Waterfront and embrace Plymouth's marine and cultural heritage:

- **Plymouth Marine Festival** – an annual new marine, waterfront and cultural signature event for the city linked to the proposed International Marine Festival, and leading to Mayflower 2020. The first Marine Festival will be held in September 2012. This will be led by Destination Plymouth, however each of its four strands – science, education, business and culture – will be developed by separate organisations.
- **'Sail Fest'** – building on Plymouth's current programme of sailing events, by increasing the number of onshore activities with family appeal and promoting the event programme under an umbrella brand. Plymouth's sailing calendar includes Race Week, Classic Boat Rally, Rolex Fastnet, and there are ambitions to grow this with further prestigious sailing championships.
- **British Firework Championships** – this signature event has been identified as a real asset, but Blue Sail have identified that there are real opportunities to further extend and strengthen this existing event, in particular through new commercial activity.

### 2.8 Star Project (2) - Telling Stories

The Visitor Plan recommends a joined-up approach to the design of interpretation, pedestrian/cycling signs and trails in the public realm. Creative and innovative interpretation delivers a well-connected and engaging environment that is a symbol of a successful city. It is about building identity and communicating it.

Telling Stories needs to make sure visitors can find their way about the city and encourage them to explore further and stay longer. It will do this in a way that encourages the visitor to appreciate Plymouth's heritage and culture while delivering practical information. The approach will be designed to be an attraction in its own right, designed to excite, amuse and invite debate.

Delivery will focus on those areas and projects with the greatest impact on the visitor economy which in the first instance will be the Waterfront and its links with the city centre, on trails, and routes along the Waterfront and gateways to the city.

The following provides a flavour of the scale and nature of the programme:

1. **City Centre** – Barbican / Sutton Harbour route – take people through attractive historic parts of the city, highly visible art installations to make the entry to the trail
2. **Along the Waterfront** (pedestrian, cycle and boat) – encourage visitors to explore the Waterfront more fully
3. **Sutton Harbour** – reinforce the distinctive quality of this area and trial new digital interpretation
4. **Royal William Yard** – promote links to the Waterfront Walkway and create a mini visitor destination
5. **Railway Station** arrival (pedestrian) – well designed welcome signs – information on digital access
6. **The Bus Station** – clear pedestrian and orientation signing
7. **Ferry Port** (car and pedestrian) – improved sense of place, arrival and welcome
8. **Along Waterfront** (links with further afield) – link cycle routes to themes and generate materials aimed at cyclists

Telling Stories will use the latest digital forms within the mix, creating opportunities for people to access layers of information that includes opportunities for crowd sourcing, digital information and for temporary and permanent commissioned pieces that create opportunities for local people to be directly involved in developing content.

Potential key themes / stories will be developed, specifically presented to appeal to the target markets, however they could include:

- Iconic history – Francis Drake, Bowls on the Hoe, Mayflower
- Other well-known historic and contemporary people associated with Plymouth e.g. Beryl Cook, Joshua Reynolds, Tom Daley
- Naval history – Captain R F Scott, war memorials, geneology
- Culture – liberty, religion and radicalism
- Application of knowledge and education
- Innovation and arts including engineering
- Famous Transatlantic ocean passenger arrivals – Walt Disney, Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chaplin
- Intriguing heritage stories e.g. Plymouth Gin, Drake's Island
- Viewpoints e.g. The Hoe, Devil's Point, Mount Batten, Mount Wise

Implementation will be prioritised, staged and divided into projects. Destination Plymouth is seeking to identify potential European partner cities to develop an initial European INTERREG bid to develop Telling Stories interpretation. Other potential sources of grant funding will be explored e.g. Arts Council, private sector sponsorship. In particular it is also recommended that the City Council supports the development of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid as part of the Telling Stories star project building to the Mayflower 2020 anniversary.

Destination Plymouth will involve local stakeholders and the community in delivery of this star project.

## 2.9 Star Project (3) - Development Sites

Plymouth will take a joined-up approach to developing visitor economy-led site opportunities and facilitate inward investment. It will map available sites on the Waterfront to create packages for development and take to market.

There are two sites that offer particular opportunities for the visitor economy in the next 3-5 years:

Royal William Yard - work with Urban Splash to raise the profile and develop the potential to make Royal William Yard a mini-destination for visitors, including the Plymouth History Centre, Ocean Studios and Plymouth Arts Centre offer.

Commercial Wharf – an opportunity to use a series of arches for creative leisure uses; maximising the opportunity to increase independent creative businesses on the Waterfront that further reinforces the city’s cultural credentials.

The success of the Visitor Plan hinges on delivery of all the Star Projects, as each reinforces and strengthens the benefits of the other. Thus improved signature events will create a platform for improved destination marketing; whilst improved links, trails and interpretation will improve the visitor’s experience, and create better opportunities to promote the city’s marine and cultural identity.

### **3.0 Markets and Marketing**

3.1 DP’s marketing plan aims to transform the way Plymouth is marketed as a visitor destination. The Plan is based on robust research of target markets that will deliver the best return on investment. It recommends that Plymouth should begin by growing the volume of day trips, by presenting the experience more strongly so that it becomes a ‘must do’ day trip. In 2-3 years we will develop new and higher value UK short break markets. In the longer-term Plymouth will build on the city’s special relationship and associations with the East Coast US market.

3.2 The main target markets are summarized as follows:

**Day Trips** - Resident Trippers; Entertainment Seekers

**Staying Trips** – University Friends and Family; Cultural Couples, US East Coasters

**Business Trips** – Business Connections; High Value Specialist Conference

3.3 The marketing plan describes what each market segment are looking for, why they are a priority for Plymouth, the key messages that are most likely to secure their visit, and their potential value to the local economy.

3.4 The plan also describes routes to market, to enable the city to take a tight focus on both markets and communication channels. Destination Plymouth will oversee the marketing plan and deliver some of the activity directly; other elements will be outsourced and delivered by partners. Initially it will focus on:

- Appointment of a dedicated Visitor Marketing Manager to lead on destination marketing delivery.
- Set up a fully interactive, first-class destination website and digital marketing platform.
- Set up a Customer Relationship Management system.
- Build destination PR to start building Plymouth’s profile and reputation.
- Develop e-marketing for target markets.

3.5 The Positively Plymouth branding will be further developed and integrated into all visitor destination marketing. DP’s marketing plan identifies specific target markets, and the messaging and media needed to best attract these different visitor markets to Plymouth.

3.6 Other specific destination marketing activity will involve support for conferencing, group travel and boat services:

- Manage a web portal and an enquiry response service for Conference Plymouth.
- Members of Conference Plymouth to subscribe to a subvention fund.
- Work with coach companies to design itineraries that include trips to Plymouth attractions and experiences.
- Develop coordinated boat services and clear digital information on the Waterfront and online.

## 4.0 Business Plan

4.1 It is essential that there is sufficient resource to deliver the Visitor Plan; ambition and commitment alone will not enable the step change Plymouth requires. DP's business plan (4-years rolling) identifies how sufficient money and people can be secured. However the business plan is being developed in a time of recession. Destination Plymouth and its partners recognise that public sector funds are tight and the private sector has less financial resource too. Plymouth has to think smart to make its available funding work overtime for the city.

4.2 Destination Plymouth and its partners will target annual additional project budgets of a minimum £300,000 each for both destination marketing and events so that the city has sufficient resource to compete with its peers. The majority of the implementation budget of £300,000 for signature events will be invested in creating the new marine/cultural signature event.

4.3 The delivery plan is based on the following principles:

- Align existing City Council resources behind the Visitor Plan
- New private sector funding
- Leverage of new funding from sponsorship, commercial revenue and grants

4.4 Destination Plymouth will seek resources for various areas of the Visitor Plan, including contributions from Plymouth City Council (a proportion of legacy funding from Plymouth City Development Company); City Centre Company BID; Plymouth Waterfront Partnership (potential BID); commercial funding generated from the commercial rental of City Council owned land in City Centre and Waterfront areas; proportion of income generated through advertising packages in the city; sponsorship (including for the new marine/cultural signature event), grant applications and affiliate membership of Destination Plymouth.

4.5 The investment made into the signature events and destination marketing activities will create a means to showcase the city to new investors and visitors, creating new opportunities for sponsors to benefit from access to these currently untapped markets and thus enabling Destination Plymouth to attract and lever in new resources to deliver the Visitor Plan.

4.6 The City Council's existing budgets will be aligned behind the Visitor Plan. During 2012/15 the City Council's total contribution will be £1,395,716, which includes £644,716 in staffing costs. This would provide a stable platform to grow private sector support for delivery of the Visitor Plan.

4.7 In addition, the Visitor Plan targets new private sector contributions. In 2012/13 the plan targets an increase of c.£250,000 from sponsorship, income generation and grants.

4.8 The business plan is based on the concept of incrementally increasing income available to Destination Plymouth for delivery of the Visitor Plan. Year by year, as the scale of signature events and marketing activities increase in scale and impact, they will enable Destination Plymouth to attract additional private sector / partner funding/grants, commercial sponsorship and advertising spend, thus growing the marketing and event activity (and associated investment opportunities) further.



## 4.9 Visitor Information

It is also recommended that a review of the existing TIC operation be completed, and that a mobile TIC service be considered which can be used to greet cruise ships, attend major events and provide enhanced customer service where it is most needed.

Plymouth will promote a joined up, cost effective, consumer focused visitor information service, using print, digital information, personal contact, and will consider different innovative approaches.

New information points will be delivered at visitor venues across the city at gateway sites and tourist attractions. Venues will offer displays, leaflets and access to digital information using smartphone technology.

### 4.9.1 Other key actions

Further, the plan recommends the following actions:

- Appoint a Visitor Economy champion.
- Develop an Employment and Skills Action Plan.
- Develop and agree a Skills and Employment Accord to deliver local jobs for local people.

Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of Visitor Plan delivery:

- Commission annual Cambridge Model Visitor Survey.
- Develop and undertake surveys to measure visitor, business and community perceptions and benefits.
- Work with the Economic Development Service to ensure that the visitor economy is covered in wider monitoring and evaluation work.

## 5.0 Events Strategy

5.1 DP will lead on and coordinate event marketing. Aligned with the Visitor Plan, and to reflect the prominence of events within it, a separate but linked PCC Events Plan 2011-20 is being produced, that will work in tandem with the Visitor Plan.

5.2 The development of large scale events and festivals is also embedded in the City's Culture Strategy 'The Vital Spark' as well as being a big driver in the Local Economic Strategy.

5.3 The Visitor Plan recognises that there are a range of local events which do not necessarily have high income or investment potential, but are nonetheless very important to the city in contributing towards its community aims and civic pride.

## 6.0 Risk Assessment

There is a risk that Destination Plymouth will not secure sufficient resources to fully deliver the Visitor Plan. Should this occur there will be a need to review, reduce and prioritise activities within the Visitor Plan. For example, if income targets for marketing purposes from partners and commercial lettings are not achieved, there would be a need to review and prioritise the marketing activity to maximise impact on the most important markets.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

It is recommended that the City Council:

- 1) Approve the Visitor Plan to be led and coordinated by Destination Plymouth and delivered in partnership with Plymouth City Council and other city stakeholders.
- 2) Approve development of European, Heritage Lottery Fund and other bids.