

County-wide plan for tourism launched

The first-ever county-wide destination management plan has been unveiled to help shape the future of tourism in Dorset.

The Destination Management Plan sets out a shared vision and framework to grow Dorset over the next ten years as a welcoming, vibrant, sustainable and year-round destination.

It aims to support local jobs, businesses and communities while enhancing the visitor experience.

The plan was launched at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery on 9 September, bringing together Dorset's public and private sector through tourism leaders, councils, businesses and destination partners.

The plan was jointly funded by Dorset and BCP Councils, through the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#), and produced with the Dorset Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Advisory Board, a private sector board established to guide delivery of the Dorset LVEP work.

It has been shaped by feedback from tourism businesses, partners and stakeholders through workshops and surveys held across Dorset. It will be delivered through the Dorset LVEP.

The plan aims to build on Dorset's strengths while encouraging more visitors throughout the year, helping spread the benefits of tourism beyond the peak summer season.

The Dorset LVEP was delighted to welcome Lyndsey Turner Swift, Deputy Director, VisitEngland, to speak at the launch. As one of England's 38 accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnerships, Dorset is part of a national network working to strengthen collaboration, leadership and sustainable growth across the visitor economy.

Lyndsey Turner Swift said: "Destination Management Plans are a key requirement of the VisitEngland national LVEP programme and provide the strategic direction needed to unlock a destination's full potential.

"Dorset has brought together businesses, local authorities and industry partners around their vision for the future, and I am delighted to be here to support the launch of this important plan. Dorset's collaborative approach demonstrates the strength of the LVEP model and creates a strong foundation for sustainable tourism growth over the coming decade."

The plan focuses on key priorities:

- Growing the year-round visitor economy
- Enhancing Dorset's destination offer
- Strengthening skills and workforce development
- Improving sustainability and accessibility
- Increasing the county's competitiveness as a visitor destination

Other speakers at the event included Cllr Richard Biggs, Deputy Leader of Dorset Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Tourism; Matthew Piles, Strategic Director at Dorset Council; and David Bailey, Chair of the Dorset LVEP Advisory Board and Dorset Tourism Association.

Cllr Biggs said: "This launch marks an important milestone for our visitor economy and demonstrates the strength of partnership working.

"Dorset Council is pleased to act as the accountable body for the Dorset LVEP, recognising that tourism is a vital part of the county's economy, supporting thousands of jobs and businesses.

"This plan provides a clear framework for sustainable growth over the next decade. By working together through our Local Visitor Economy Partnership, we can build on Dorset's strengths, extend the visitor season, support our communities and ensure the county remains one of the UK's most desirable places to visit, live and work."

David Bailey said: "Dorset's first Destination Management Plan provides a clear, shared framework for how we will work together to strengthen Dorset's reputation, support local businesses, enhance the visitor experience and create sustainable growth over the next ten years. This plan belongs to the whole county, and its success will be built on collaboration between the public and private sectors, communities and tourism businesses."

An overview of the Destination Management Plan and its implementation programme was given by Samantha Richardson MBE, Director of the National Coastal Tourism Academy alongside a presentation of the Dorset Off-Peak Sentiment Report, the first action delivered under the new strategy.

The strategy will be delivered through a programme of actions developed with partners across the public and private sectors, ensuring tourism continues to play a vital role in supporting local jobs, businesses and communities.