



BLUE SAIL ▶

VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

THANET DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN MARGATE, RAMSGATE & BROADSTAIRS

FOR THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL AND DMP PROJECT GROUP

AUGUST 2013

CONTENTS

1	THE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN AT A GLANCE	3
2	THANET'S VISITORS.....	11
3	THE ISLE OF THANET STORY	16
4	PRIORITY PROJECTS.....	17
5	PRIORITY ONE: BEACH MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT.....	18
6	PRIORITY TWO: COASTAL REGENERATION	26
7	PRIORITY THREE: TELLING OUR STORIES.....	33
8	MAKING IT HAPPEN.....	40

1 THE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN AT A GLANCE

This is the Destination Management Plan for the Isle of Thanet. It is a Plan for the place and sets out the priorities for the next five years to help Thanet achieve its potential as a visitor destination. It builds on current plans and activity. It uses what is special about Thanet to help it stand out from the competition. It focuses on new activity to help improve the visitor economy and encourage investment. The priorities are all market and quality led. They establish the foundations for a new way of working between partners across the towns of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs to create a critical mass of great experiences.

The Plan is designed to be read by a wide audience. Stakeholders have been closely involved in each step of its development and its findings are informed by new market research conducted for this project and by the tourism, regeneration and economic development policies for Thanet and Kent. The way forward and the recommendations have been agreed with the industry and with public sector partners who will work together to deliver the actions, which are practical and achievable.

HOW WE DEVELOPED THE DMP

This Destination Management Plan has been developed over a 9 month period. It has been steered by a Project Group comprising representatives from Thanet District Council, key public agencies and the local industry. We have also met with further industry representatives and Council staff, presented to key groups and facilitated workshops and action planning sessions at stages throughout the development of the Plan to ensure there is buy-in to the process and the recommendations. Over 60 people – businesses and people working in the public sector - have contributed their views and been involved in helping to shape this Plan.

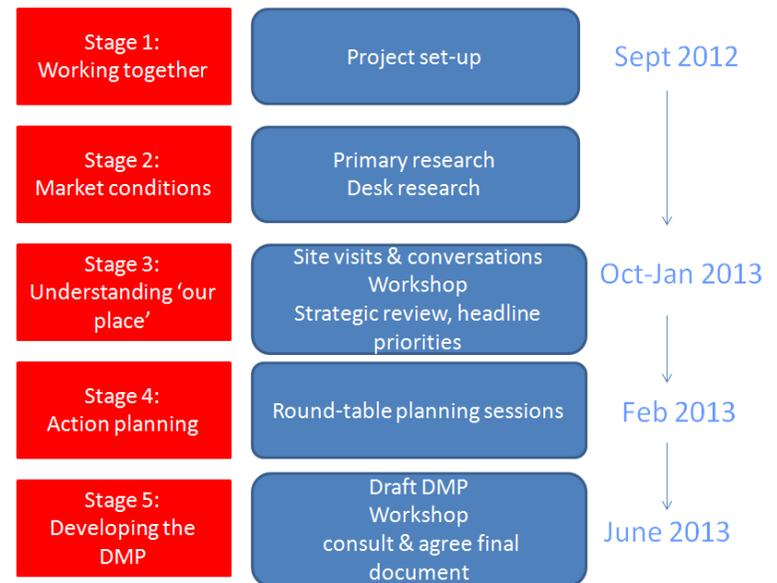
As part of this project, VisitKent has undertaken primary research to find out more about leisure visitors to Thanet including a survey of the views of 861 people who live, work and visit Thanet. They have undertaken a market segmentation profile of nearly 2,000 visitors to Thanet to find out more about people who are coming now and drawn on perceptions research of over 4,700 people to understand what they think

about Kent as a destination. We have reviewed all the existing plans and current activity because the DMP is about adding value not about covering well worn ground and duplicating what is already happening. Visit Kent has produced a policy and strategy context paper as part of the outputs of this project and this is available as a separate volume. We reference and draw on that work here to demonstrate how the DMP will contribute to delivering regeneration and economic development policy for Thanet and for Kent.

We have reviewed the markets and identified a new market segment for Thanet that has a strong fit with the market opportunities identified by VisitEngland. We have looked at what Thanet needs to do to maximise the potential of that market over the next three years.

We have also developed a Shared Story for the destination as a way to describe what is special and different about the place, that everyone can use when they are planning how to invest in improvements and new experiences, and when they are talking to people who don't know the place. It has informed the DMP actions.

The DMP process has identified three areas for priority over the next five years. These are additional activities and need additional resources to make them happen. The process of developing the DMP has also demonstrated an appetite for tourism industry networks and for groups that enable the industry to be involved in the DMP delivery; Project Delivery Groups are built into the DMP project plans to enable this.



WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Thanet is a well-established visitor destination on the Kent coast, known for its sandy beaches and the three coastal towns of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs, each with a distinctive history and personality. It has an interesting seaside heritage and a growing cultural offer. Recent investments in Turner Contemporary, new plans for the Dreamland site and the regeneration of Margate's Old Town and the redevelopment of Ramsgate Harbour have been complemented by private investment in a small but growing number of distinctive, quality places to stay and places to eat and drink. Some of that investment is by long established local businesses and some from inward investment by new small businesses. Thanet is beginning to attract people from London to live, invest and visit and wants to attract more visitors, for them to spend more and for more of them to come for a short break rather than a day trip. It wants to invest in culturally-led tourism regeneration and to support quality.

To achieve these objectives, partners in Thanet will:

- ▶ Deliver quality experiences for existing markets, develop new experiences to grow market share and attract new higher spending visitors looking for short-breaks
- ▶ Present the three towns more strongly together, playing to the strengths of each and making it easy for the visitor to explore along the coast and to get around
- ▶ Invest in the experience of its beaches, Thanet's strongest natural assets – their development and management
- ▶ Prioritise investment in new quality character accommodation to enable Thanet to grow the short break market - to achieve longer stays and higher spend
- ▶ Make more of its location – the Isle, the big skies, the natural coastline and importantly its proximity to London by high-speed train and the market opportunities that brings

THE THREE SEASIDE TOWNS

Margate – the original seaside resort – has a strong place in the English psyche, for its longstanding reputation for traditional seaside fun, now mixed with added cultural and creative edge.

Ramsgate – with its Royal Harbour, ferry terminal, and Marina – faces the Continent and can feel quite cosmopolitan – witness its burgeoning waterfront bars and restaurants.

Broadstairs – with its clifftop promenade and retro '50s coffee bars, overlooks a quaint quayside, fishermen's cottages and sandy beach. Everything is on an intimate scale. Dickens' presence is palpable.

- ▶ Stimulate the environment to encourage investment in new quality visitor attractions, visitor experiences and places to stay.

HOW WE ARE GOING TO GET THERE

Thanet will:

ESTABLISH NEW **ways of working which are driven by a partnership** between the industry and the public sector, where Thanet District Council acts as catalyst, facilitator and partner

Recognise that **collaboration across Thanet** can build a critical mass of experiences and collaboration with East Kent more widely can open up further opportunities

Tackle some of the barriers to making things happen

Ensure tourism is one of the drivers of the local economy and put steps in place to enable that, including **supporting tourism business sustainability, growth and inward investment**

THE BIG PICTURE

Tourism and the visitor economy is a priority in Thanet. There is a range of strategies and policy documents that recognise the importance of tourism and identify some of the barriers to growth. The Thanet Sustainable Community Strategy highlights current low visitor spend and the need to attract staying visitors because they have a higher value, and the Thanet Economic Strategy recognises the value of the visitor economy and the need to develop a Destination Management Plan *to steer and align tourism activity*.

A report to the South East LEP¹ states that the coastal communities of the south east account for 1 million people, (25% of the LEP's population), but these communities are in areas of social and economic disadvantage, well behind LEP or even national averages. The report recommends - *there is a good case for a bid to the Regional Growth Fund to support seaside tourism. This would be a practical way for the South East LEP to encourage growth and jobs.*

The visitor economy is at the heart of the Council's Corporate Plan and this DMP has a strong fit with the following six priorities in the Plan.

- ▶ We will support the growth of our economy and the number of people in work (Priority 1)
- ▶ We will support our community and voluntary organisations (Priority 3)
- ▶ We will support excellent and diverse cultural facilities and activities for our residents and visitors (Priority 8)
- ▶ We will support a broad range of sports, leisure and coastal facilities and activities (Priority 9)
- ▶ We will influence the work of other agencies to ensure the best outcomes for Thanet (Priority 10)
- ▶ We will protect and preserve our public open spaces (Priority 11)

Thanet Corporate Plan 2012-16

The Thanet Regeneration Board identifies culture, heritage & tourism, the green economy, business growth, investing in assets and skills for employment and growth as the strategic priority themes for economic growth and regeneration.

This DMP responds to all these plans by providing clear recommendations. It focuses on a small number of strategic projects that can help realise potential, grow the visitor economy and deliver local and regional aspirations.

The newly launched East Kent regeneration blueprint, Open For Growth and East Kent's bid to become the UK City of

¹ The Coast Communities of South East England, Recommendations to the South East LEP

Culture in 2017 are examples of Kent's confidence, drive for inward investment and commitment to culture and the visitor economy. In addition, Expansion East Kent, (the Regional Growth Fund Programme) is providing a £35 million programme of financial support to businesses seeking to invest in East Kent to create jobs. This DMP is well-timed to put in place new working partnerships and initiatives now to help capitalise on these and other opportunities as they progress.

In 2011 Visit Kent led on a European funding bid to develop the CAST (Coastal Actions for Sustainable Tourism) programme. Working collaboratively with coastal districts, the programme of work culminated in a shared vision for the development of Kent's coast and a clearer view of how and where the coast's visitor economy should be heading to retain its unique sense of place. The new EU Seaconomics programme is the successor to CAST.

Kent County Council's Blueprint for the Future recognises that Kent's coast is already coming back to life and by 2020 will have the UK's most distinctive and thriving coast. The 2013-2015 Business Plan for Visit Kent has specifically identified the need to support destinations to develop Destination Management Plans in accordance with the Visit England Gold Standard, as a basis for not only best practice destination development but also to inspire local strategic planning and funding bid development.

At national level the English seaside warrants special mention because of its unique set of assets, challenges and opportunities. English Heritage provides a check list for local authorities responsible for coastal regeneration and Visit England has published a dedicated Seaside Action Plan to help maximise the potential of seaside resorts and grow the domestic visitor economy by 5% year on year. The Department for Communities and Local Government sets out a vision for seaside towns in its Strategy for Seaside Success.

However, there remain some big challenges for coastal tourism. The Kent Tourism Framework (2009) identifies three big questions - *how to reach a position where individual towns work together to attract greater visitor interest rather than compete in the same markets; how to tackle the reduction in the amount of visitor accommodation which makes it difficult to attract more short breaks; and how to address the under-investment that has happened over time in the visitor economy infrastructure.* This DMP is about tackling these challenges.

Each of Kent's major coastal towns has seen a major reduction in their visitor accommodation stock over the last 20 years. The situation appears to have stabilised and new investment is now being made. However the towns share a need to attract more, better quality visitor accommodation in line with modern-day visitor expectations and to capitalise fully on the significant investments and improvements being made.

Kent & Medway Tourism Development Framework – Kent County Council

The Kent & Medway Tourism Development Framework identifies on-going investment in regeneration programmes and focuses on local distinctiveness as the way forward. The DMP identifies achievable actions to encourage investment in seafront infrastructure and in new visitor accommodation over the next five years. The Shared Story provides a route to help

businesses market and capitalise on Thanet's distinctiveness in a joined up way (see Section 3).

The DMP delivers against the following strategic objectives of the Kent & Medway Tourism Development Framework, namely to:

- ▶ Help existing businesses improve their performance and develop further, in line with evolving market requirements
- ▶ Identify, encourage and support additional visitor economy businesses and facilities that will enhance Kent's attractiveness as a destination and increase market penetration, particularly through generating more staying visits
- ▶ Make the most of opportunities for visitor economy development afforded by on-going investment in regeneration programmes and projects
- ▶ Focus on local distinctiveness to enable Kent and its individual destinations to stand out from the crowd but also combine to offer a range of complimentary offers to potential visitors
- ▶ Ensure that key public and private sector players work together as effectively as possible towards achieving agreed tourism development priorities;
- ▶ Improve the skills of people who work in Kent's tourism industry and the quality of welcome and service received by visitors
- ▶ Deliver and sustain a quality tourism product for visitors.

The Coastal Communities Fund, Interreg V and Arts Council Funding programmes all offer potential sources of funding to help support the new activity set out in this DMP. The DMP partners are in conversation with the Arts Council about support for specific projects and DMP projects are being included within EU funding bids. The detail is set out in the Project Plans at Section 8.

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Research shows that visitors are overwhelmingly attracted to Thanet for its beaches and coastline. It is essential that Thanet delivers an excellent quality experience along its coast and invests in the experiences on its beaches and along its seafronts. To attract more visitors and more overnight trips, Thanet needs more character places to stay and a wider range of things to see and do during the day and in the evenings. It also needs to present a distinctive offer in the marketplace that plays to its strengths and ensures tourism businesses support that through their marketing and investment. The headline priorities for the DMP over the next 5 years are designed to help deliver these priorities:

- ▶ **Beach management and development** – to deliver a programme of prioritised beach-by-beach improvements, informed and steered by a new Beach Management Delivery Group, and to identify and deliver community and industry-managed beaches that are freely available

to everyone and which incorporate the best creative and commercial ideas to enhance quality, protect the environment and deliver new distinctive experiences

- ▶ **Coastal regeneration** – to make a stronger case for tourism regeneration in specific underused or derelict coastal buildings and target inward investment to those specialist developers who can inject creative solutions and deliver new quality developments – large and small - that reinforce what is distinctive about Thanet and create much needed character accommodation
- ▶ **Telling our stories** – using the Shared Story developed for the DMP to create a stronger sense of place through a joined-up approach to marketing, information and interpretation, including helping small tourism businesses improve the quality of their marketing through skills development and support. The emphasis is on business engagement, support for the DMP and delivering a consistent quality product.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS

We will use the following indicators to measure progress.

- ▶ Higher profile of Thanet as a place to visit for quality English coastline and seaside towns
- ▶ Numbers of jobs created and sustained
- ▶ Growth in volume and value of tourism
- ▶ Number of bed spaces and room occupancy
- ▶ Greater community pride and cohesion between the coastal towns
- ▶ Stronger industry and public sector partnerships
- ▶ Greater visitor satisfaction.

2 THANET'S VISITORS

The majority of current visitors to Thanet come for the day – half of them travelling from home and another quarter from a holiday base elsewhere. Most visit in the summer, with a significant peak in August. One third of Thanet's visitors are families with children – the rest are adult-only couples and groups. More than half of Thanet's visitors are under 45 years old.

Around half of Thanet's visitors are in the socio economic groups ABC1 – this is typical for seaside resorts in the UK, but low compared to holiday destinations generally. Probably related to this, Thanet's visitors have a lower spend per head than the average for visitors to Kent destinations.

Within this profile, Thanet attracts international students – a niche and important existing market – that contribute to the younger profile of Thanet's visitors and generate an estimated £30 million to the local economy. International students are important ambassadors for the area and are potential future repeat visitors.

Day visitors are important for Thanet businesses but to extend the impact on the local economy, Thanet needs to attract more staying visitors – those who will spend money on accommodation and also in restaurants and shops and support the development of more quality and character retail and accommodation. And – to get businesses on a firm footing, able to invest and offer quality, year-round jobs – visitors are needed throughout the year, not only in the summer months and school holidays. That means Thanet needs to attract more people who are free to visit outside peak times. This does not mean that others will not come; it is a question of where to focus resources to make a difference.

There are clear opportunities for Thanet to reach out to new markets:

- ▶ The 'staycation' effect – the steep rise in numbers of British people now taking leisure breaks in Britain – offers the chance to attract new visitors, as long as the offer is right.

CURRENT VISITORS

- ▶ 3.1 million p.a.
- ▶ 75% are day visitors
- ▶ 66% are adult-only couples & groups - higher in Ramsgate, lower in Broadstairs
- ▶ Most are from the UK – less than 10% come from overseas
- ▶ By far the strongest reason to visit is the seaside/ beaches
- ▶ Most travel here by car
- ▶ Most visit in the summer – with a significant peak in August

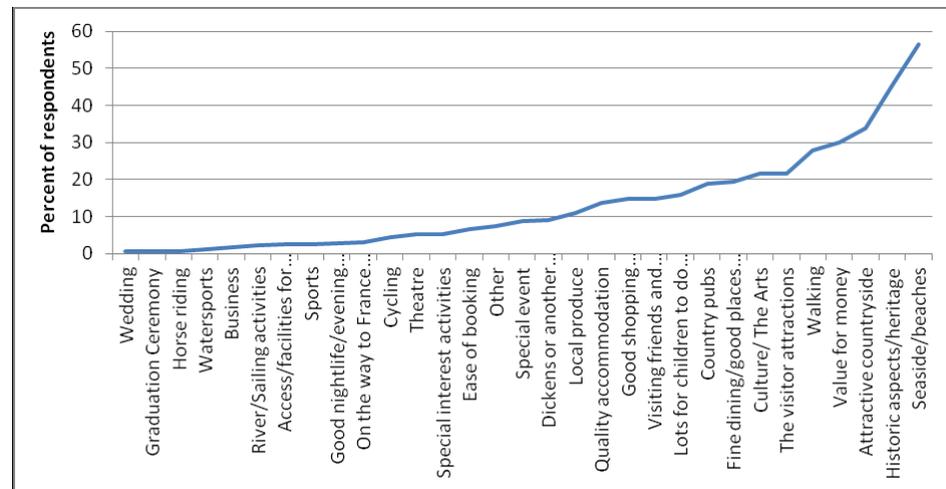
From: TDC Thanet Visitor Survey 2010 & Visit Kent DMP Research 2012

- ▶ Visit Kent’s new research into the perceptions of thousands of people – visitors and non-visitors who live outside Kent, both in the UK and in near Europe – show increasing recognition that the county has a “stunning coastline” and high awareness in the UK for Margate (86%) and Ramsgate (81%).

But there are challenges. These visitors and potential visitors do not see the seaside towns in Thanet as places that are “year round” or “natural”; and they single Margate out as “tacky”.²

Some of these negatives are to do with general attitudes to the English seaside. Seaside destinations are losing market share to city breaks and trips to the countryside. The seaside tends to attract fewer high-spending visitors and more families with children, than other types of leisure destination.³ VisitEngland say that the British are prejudiced against seaside resorts, seeing them as “tacky, dirty, dated and faded”.⁴

VisitEngland also says that people *are* interested in “the English coastline” as somewhere to get away from it all, slow down, go beachcombing and for walks – places where you can discover bays, fishing villages and buy local produce and seafood. The idea of “seaside towns” appeals too - places with more to do, local history, places of interest and places to eat and drink.



Factors influencing people’s decision to visit Thanet: seaside/beaches is number 1, followed by heritage, attractive countryside, and value for money
Visit Kent DMP Research 2012

² Visit Kent Perceptions Study 2012

³ VisitEngland research re different holiday destination types 2011

⁴ VisitEngland Staycation Focus Groups 2012

Successful seaside destinations are the places that deliver these experiences. Thanet needs to focus on improving and developing these aspects.

Among potential growth markets for coastal destinations, VisitEngland has identified younger people – especially pre-families – living in London as least affected by the recession and most optimistic about their holiday plans (while other people are currently cutting back on leisure breaks). They want to take staycations, but know very little about the coast within easy reach of home, compared to a very few “iconic” places such as Cornwall and are looking for inspiration and information.⁵ We also know that busy people want to get the most from their short breaks, spending time and money enjoying the break, rather than on travelling there.

Thanet is well placed to tap into this opportunity because of its fast rail connections with London. However, as high-speed rail also makes Thanet an easy day trip destination, it will be important to position Thanet as a place with enough things to do to justify staying a night or more and to deliver on that promise.

Below is a profile of this market; it uses VisitEngland’s research and niche of young Londoners already visiting Thanet (identified in Visit Kent’s DMP Research 2012). This should be a primary target for Thanet because some of these types of people are already visiting, research shows they are a growth opportunity and much of the recent and planned investment in the visitor economy in Thanet is likely to appeal to them. Importantly, getting the experiences and messages right for these people will have a wider impact on other markets (who aspire to follow these early adopters).

WHAT TARGETING THIS MARKET WILL MEAN

Targeting this market means ‘joining-up’ what’s on offer across the district so that Thanet presents a critical mass of experiences that suggest somewhere with enough to do for a short break - from cultural attractions and eclectic shopping in Margate, to waterfront restaurants and bars in Ramsgate and Broadstairs, to watersports and trails around the coastline. That requires stronger partnership working between businesses, including on marketing and promotion.

⁵ VisitEngland Staycation Research 2012

These are cultural consumers, it will be important to support, further develop and promote the contemporary cultural scene – especially arts events and live music, galleries and ‘edgy’ independent retail. They are ethical, green consumers, looking for something different, so there needs to be an emphasis on developing and supporting more independent businesses. Thanet already has a strong independent sector; this market can help support a greater critical mass.

They are sophisticated consumers with comfortably-off city lifestyles; there needs to be a focus on developing contemporary quality when it comes to accommodation and food and drink. They are physically active, so it will be important to develop and promote the opportunities to get a ‘fresh-air fix’ easily on a short break. As green consumers, public transport users and ‘early adopters’, joint promotions with the rail operators – especially hi-speed trains – will be important.

Excellent online presence is essential for this market – that means a distinctive website with good search engine optimisation, designed for tablets and mobiles, with rich visual and audio content, live updates from social media and links through to other online media channels. PR needs to promote the idea of a place that is changing and ‘on the up’.

WHO ARE THEY?

- ▶ Living in London – in their 20s to early 40s.
- ▶ They have money to spend.
- ▶ They take several holidays and short breaks a year – usually without a car.
- ▶ They are ‘early adopters’ – always looking for the next new thing and juggling their busy lives.
- ▶ They enjoy physical activities, culture and independent shops/bars/restaurants.



WHY THESE PEOPLE?

- ▶ There are 1.2m living in London (so a big potential market on Thanet’s doorstep)
- ▶ VisitEngland has identified them as least impacted by recession and most optimistic about their holiday plans – other segments are cutting back on leisure breaks
- ▶ VisitEngland has identified these types as interested in staycation, especially post Olympics
- ▶ They take very high numbers of short breaks (though they are probably less likely than older markets to repeat – but they will recommend to friends and colleagues if Thanet can satisfy their expectations)
- ▶ They are less budget-conscious than older markets – they will support Thanet’s higher quality independent businesses, and so strengthen and sustain improvements to the offer
- ▶ As city-dwellers, they will not be alienated by urban decay – they will see past it
- ▶ The message about a car-free escape, plus the high-speed trains, will be attractive to them
- ▶ They will be attracted by the idea of watersports and other outdoor activities
- ▶ They will travel year round (albeit it will be largely weekend rather than weekday)

3 THE ISLE OF THANET STORY

The most successful places have a simple Shared Story to tell. It is a commonly agreed way of describing the place, that everyone uses when they are planning how to invest in improvements and new experiences, and when they are talking to people who don't know the place.

It is a short and simple story that makes it clear what is special and different about the place. It does not overpromise; it goes with the grain of the place and it is authentic and true. It focuses on the distinctive qualities that capture the essence of the place: it isn't a list of everything that is on offer. If everyone uses the same broad ideas to develop the place and then uses some of the same concepts and phrases to talk about it externally, the image of Thanet and the experiences in the place will be much stronger. That leads to greater impact, which means more visitors and stronger investment.

This is the Shared Story for Thanet, developed with local stakeholders. It has helped shape the DMP actions and should continue to inform business decisions, investment, marketing and management priorities.

Londoners have been **escaping** to the Isle of Thanet for more than 200 years ... for the **laidback** seaside vibe ... **brehtaking** sandy beaches ... **fresh** sea air... and **romantic** Turner skies ...

Here at the very **edge** of the **Garden of England**, three **Georgian and Victorian** resorts, each with its own distinctive character – Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate – **cluster** around the **bays** at the far end of a **peninsula**.

There's a **retro** feel to these harbour towns, with their remarkable 18th and 19th century **architecture**, their **classic seaside heritage** and kitsch, their eclectic attractions and live arts and music venues. And there is a variety of **independent** places to shop, eat, drink and stay.

Miles of low **chalk cliffs** edge the peninsula, sheltering a string of **secluded, unspoilt sandy bays**. Chalk **rockpools**, chalk stacks and **rare** chalk reefs teem with **wildlife**. These are the closest **surfing beaches** to the capital city: a popular choice with south-east boarders.

Artists, writers and musicians have long been inspired by this almost-island ... and continue to be drawn here. **Turner** said Thanet had "the loveliest skies in all Europe" ... for **Dickens** Broadstairs was "the freshest, freest place" ... and Tracey **Emin** declares in pink neon on Margate seafront: "I never stopped loving you".

The Isle's a **historic landing place** steeped in symbolism for the story of Britain ... the **first Saxons Hengist and Horsa** arrived and settled here ... and **St Augustine** first stepped onto these shores on his way to nearby **Canterbury**.

For this is the **furthest** south east you can go in Britain ... almost touching mainland **Europe** ... yet these days only 75 minutes from central London ...

And now with the **Turner Contemporary** gallery and **high-speed trains** from the capital ... **a new generation** is discovering this **original seaside escape**.

4 PRIORITY PROJECTS

Research, consultation and analysis identified some clear priorities - additional areas of activity to complement and boost what Thanet is already doing to develop and promote tourism. These priority projects are about Beach Management & Development, Coastal Regeneration and Telling Our Stories (how the destination and its businesses can use the Shared Story to develop their offer and communicate and market it). These projects create the focus for the DMP, selected because they have the ability to make a difference, forge partnerships and strengthen the visitor economy. They need intervention to make them happen.

Actions focus on investing in Thanet's natural and built assets and on business growth, underpinned by skills support for tourism and cultural SMEs. The DMP aims to create more things to see and do, which helps position Thanet as a short break destination. To achieve that positioning, it is critical to attract inward investment in places to stay. Hotel companies will invest in those destinations where they have identified untapped demand.

The DMP is also about supporting and enabling a new way of partnership working and decision making between the Council and the industry and less about prescriptive actions. Setting up new groups and capacity building are essential to deliver this and central to the early actions of the DMP. These groups will develop and evolve their tasks and roles overtime.

There are funding opportunities available now for innovative pilots through EU Programmes and for soft loan schemes to encourage private sector investment through Expansion East Kent (Regional Growth Fund). The DMP is designed to take advantage of these opportunities and to ensure businesses understand how to access them.

In the following three sections, the plan sets out more detail on each priority project and early tasks phased over the 5-year life of the DMP. Aspects of Beach Management & Development and Coastal Regeneration will take longer to deliver because of the nature and scale of change they aspire to achieve. In the early years the focus is on foundation tasks that create a strong base on which to build.

5 PRIORITY ONE: BEACH MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

Thanet's beaches, bays and cliffs are among its strongest assets. They are overwhelmingly what motivate people to visit. Their development, management and presentation should be excellent in every way. Well-maintained beaches are particularly important because everyone will visit a beach during their stay; they showcase the destination.

Beaches are well-used and a number of the bays have Blue Flags. However, the coast is a corrosive environment, so beach infrastructure can be costly to maintain. They are part of the public realm and traditionally the maintenance costs fall to the local authority. Thanet's beaches are not all the same. It is important to play to those differences and see each beach as an attraction in its own right or as a local community asset, and develop and manage it accordingly.

It is essential that coastal wildlife and natural habitats are valued and remain protected in this process. The quality of Thanet's coastal wildlife and habitats are nationally recognised in SSSI, and pMCZ and NNR designations, and internationally within the Ramsar, SPA and two SAC⁶ designations. These designations are collectively known as the 'N.E. Kent MPA'. New beach developments, trails and other coastal activity provide an opportunity for visitors to learn more about Thanet's coastal wildlife and to communicate responsible visitor behaviour.

Beaches can provide the location for new styles of relatively inexpensive, flexible and fun visitor accommodation – a modern rework of the traditional beach hut – through the introduction of well designed pods or individual units that can offer a stylish self-catering option in superb locations to appeal to Thanet's priority markets.

Thanet will prioritise:

- ▶ Measures to improve and focus the day-to-day management of the beaches and the water quality with the effective deployment of resources along the Thanet coastline, taking a beach-by-beach approach.

⁶ SSSI - Site of Special Scientific interest; pMCZ - potential 'Marine Conservation Zone'; NNR - National Nature Reserve; SPA - Special Protected Area NE Kent; MPA - North East Kent Marine Protected Area

- ▶ Actions that encourage the development of new activities along the coast and introduce new management models for beaches where appropriate
- ▶ Encourage the development of beach-based units to provide new visitor accommodation opportunities.

The three principal actions are to:

1. **Develop a Beach Management Plan** – a beach-by-beach approach that draws on best practice to inform and inspire. The objective is to provide a clearer understanding of the resources available to each beach and how they are deployed. The plan will give all stakeholders access to the management costs and revenue from each beach and that means a better understanding of what's involved for infrastructure provision, amenities, facilities and services, signage, enforcement and operational issues as well as for planning and conservation policies. It will ensure joined-up working across Council departments responsible for beach management.
2. **Establish a Beach Business Group** – to foster collaborative working and shared experience, and to explore an industry led membership programme to generate additional funding for targeted beach management, possibly as part of a DMP-wide delivery approach. It will meet 2 to 3 times a year to share information, for members to network, and as a forum to explore new ways of raising revenue and extending capacity. Membership will include beach businesses because their livelihood is dependent on effective beach management.
3. **Develop opportunities for managed beaches** – Thanet will make a detailed case, drawing on international best practice and building on initial work undertaken by the CAST Programme for East Kent. It will develop and pilot innovative and creative approaches for some beaches, e.g. themed beaches with bespoke facilities for particular users.

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
1. Produce a Beach Management Plan - a strategic framework that takes a beach-by-beach approach							
Beach Management Plan	Completed end 2013	TDC, VK, Beach Watch Group, Water User Group, Town Councils, Environment Agency, Harbour Board, Thanet Coast Project, NE Kent Marine Protected Area	Plan completed and shared	staff time, potential for EU funding support	Single plan for beach management to inform development and management priorities All private sector interests provided copy of beach data relevant to their operation	High	Yes

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
<i>Improve public information about beach cleaning</i>							
Improve information on beach cleansing programmes through existing channels	Approach agreed and in place for summer 2014	TDC, Water User Group, Harbour Board, Isle Magazine, local accommodation businesses, Southern Water	Programme agreed	TDC and partner time	From June 2013 real time information made available via chalk boards, web sites and twitter about seaweed clearance, cleaning and other environmental and quality elements of the beach experience.	High	Yes
Establish customer care programme for staff/contractors	Programme agreed end of 2013 – commences 2014 season	VK through Ambassadors programme – include green tourism information connected with protected habitats and wildlife		Budget for bespoke training programme	75% of frontline staff in 2014 completed training 100% of frontline staff in 2015 completed training Reduction in number of recorded complaints about beach cleanliness improves from 2014 summer season onwards	Medium	

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
2. Establish a Beach Business Group							
Establish Beach Business Groups – one overarching plus local to towns	Launch 2013	TDC, VK, town representatives, Leisure Force, seafront businesses	Regular meetings of group	TDC /Industry staff time	All beach based private sector interests invited to join Group 50% of relevant businesses/interest groups involved Clear direction for BBG activities	High	Yes
Group to agree key objectives and priority actions e.g. lobby on water quality, support Beach Management Study, improve beach cleanliness	2013		Production of BBG Priority Plan		Newsworthy progress achieved on top 3 priorities by summer 2015	High	Yes
Identify new funding streams for beach management including best practice models that provide potential for stakeholder to contribute to new activities	2014 onwards		Agreement of a channel to raise funds for beach management investment		Specific new non-TDC core funds identified and in place for beach management on selection of priority visitor beaches by summer 2015 Budget plan agreed by TDC/BBG	High	Yes

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
<i>Enforcing by-laws</i>							
Review beach enforcement procedures/structure	Completed 2014	TDC/Beach Business Group/ Police	Review completed	Time	Analysis of current enforcement actions and clear objectives for future delivery.	Medium	Yes
Identify additional resource required for optimal service and funding sources	2014		Potential funding streams and volunteer resources identified.		Clear understanding of need for additional resources over and above TDC input	Medium	
Liaise with police to identify areas of operation and responsibility	2014		Meeting held		Clear lines of communication and understanding of areas of operation/response established	Medium	
Seek private sector sponsorship for additional resources	2015		Sponsorship deal agreed		1 sponsorship deal in place for 2015	Medium	
Review delivery and set priorities for future actions	2015		Priorities agreed		Sponsorship packages and offer agreed	Medium	
Seek private sector sponsorship for additional resources	2015		Sponsorship deals agreed		2 sponsorship deals in place for 2016	Medium	

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
3. Develop opportunities for community and industry-managed beaches							
Draw up brief for Feasibility Study	2014	TDC/East Kent College	Brief prepared and agreed with East Kent College	staff time	Contract for work let	High	Yes
Research potential private sector beach management & development options e.g. develop beach accommodation	Completed summer 2015	East Kent College/VK	Best Practice Visits Pilot Scenario studies incl cost/benefit	East Kent College time/ EU funding	Feasibility study for 3 beaches finalised		
Prepare contracts and seek expressions of interest	2015	TDC/VK	Expressions of Interest received	Promotional budget	3 expressions of interest received		
Let 1 st phase long-term leases for beach management/development	2016	TDC	Contracts signed	TDC Staff/EU pilot funding	3 beaches under new, long-term lease management		
1 st new beach development activity launched	2016	Private sector	New facilities for visitors e.g. beach hut accommodation	Private sector investment/EU funding	New private sector beach investment achieved Creation of > 5 FTEs		
Let 2 nd phase leases	2017			Promotional budget	2 further beaches under new long-term lease management		

Abbreviations - TDC = Thanet District Council; VK = Visit Kent; KCC = Kent County Council, HLF = Heritage Lottery Fund, BBG = Beach Business Group

6 PRIORITY TWO: COASTAL REGENERATION

Thanet needs more things for visitors to see and do – reasons to visit, reasons to stay longer and more quality character visitor accommodation to make that possible; accommodation that delivers what target markets are looking for. Thanet's intact historic townscape and its special historic seafront provide opportunities for investment that can enrich the visitor experience. Some of the investment needs to be large scale and some smaller, the latter driven by independent creative businesses that are part of what makes Thanet special, shape the personality of the place and which reinforce the Isle of Thanet's Shared Story. The actions in this priority area are the first steps to help realise that objective. Thanet District Council should support further bespoke investment through its planning policies, local plans and through business and funding support programmes.

The majority of hotel development companies have a tried and tested formula that works for their brand and their business model. They will invest in Thanet if it meets those criteria. Thanet should communicate clear messages about its competitive advantage to attract these hotel developers. It should look to attract a range of types of hotel to deliver not only more bedrooms but also additional places to eat and meeting rooms. It also needs to encourage inward investment by niche developers and companies looking to invest in upcoming places. These developers can play an important part in delivering distinctive quality experiences that contribute to Thanet's competitive positioning. They will choose Thanet because of its character, are more likely to work with the grain of the place, want to be active partners, be quality-led and be committed to Thanet.

There are a number of large, highly visible, rundown and underused buildings and sites along the coast. These buildings detract from the natural beauty of the coastline and the investment that is happening elsewhere in the towns and along the seafronts. Some of these buildings offer potential for the visitor economy. They are difficult buildings to tackle and require intervention to deliver investment in them. Some of these buildings are in the ownership of Thanet District Council, creating an opportunity for the Council to lead the way and help stimulate the commercial marketplace by creating momentum and through best practice. A first task is to identify which of them might be adapted for tourism-related uses. These large buildings are assets because of their prime location but liabilities because many are in a poor state of repair, some are listed and the size and scale of the restoration needed may dissuade developers from considering them. These buildings need a bespoke approach to encourage and support investment from lateral-thinking, niche developers who may have tackled similar challenges in metropolitan and waterfront cities and who are familiar with forming joint ventures with local authorities. These buildings are big challenges and there is no quick-win solution but there may be 'meanwhile' uses - temporary or occasional uses that can bring colour and life back into the buildings in the short-term, which may evolve into permanent uses and will showcase the building and its potential. These

meanwhile uses create a buzz and add to the visitor experience. Thanet has begun using that approach by looking at meanwhile uses for Dreamland Cinema, for example.

Thanet also needs to think of ways to capitalise on its creative community and its unique heritage assets by looking to programmes and schemes that can support and encourage smaller scale new tourism businesses and heritage groups realise their potential and deliver new product and experiences for visitors. It is important that what happens in coastal regeneration supports regeneration in the Isle's high streets to deliver a joined-up destination. The key actions are to:

- 1. Create a shortlist of tourism development priority sites along the coast and promote them to specialist developers** – use an audit to make the case, create a focus for effort and 'at a glance' developer-relevant information which includes sections on 'fit with the Local Plan and with the Shared Story', 'potential tourism-related uses (permanent and meanwhile)' and 'funding opportunities'. Carry out feasibility studies where relevant and introduce creative meanwhile uses to make those buildings lively and engaging in the short term. Also identify opportunities for retro fitting and sustainable best practice where appropriate to reinforce Thanet's green credentials.
- 2. Produce Top 10 Reasons to Invest in Tourism in Thanet** - clear, distinctive promotional information that is used to target specialist niche developers and to host site visits and events that bring together local champions (including businesses and investors), developers and key staff at Thanet District Council.
- 3. Support heritage and special interest groups to become local enablers** – Thanet has several groups active in looking at sites, locations and heritage projects - building their capacity will support grassroots solutions and help create a coordinated response to heritage investment and funding. The commitment, knowledge and input of these groups are essential to help realise the potential of Thanet's heritage. The development of the Thanet Heritage Strategy will help support the work of these groups and provide important context for funding bids.
- 4. Develop a 'Staying above the Studio' pilot scheme to create character accommodation, developed and managed by the local creative industries sector** - the creative talent of Thanet is part of the destination experience and small arts businesses frequently need to generate additional income streams to achieve sustainability. By encouraging and equipping arts SMEs with the skills to develop and manage small scale character B&B and self-catering accommodation, the DMP will help deliver sustainable and profitable arts businesses and diversify and strengthen business skills within the creative sector. There is an economic multiplier effect to this, building sustainability and business growth that creates demand for further services and attracts more of similar businesses to choose Thanet as a place to start a business.

Thanet District Council will actively and wisely use the planning process to help support the delivery of all these actions.

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
1. Create a shortlist of tourism development priority sites along the coast and promote them to specialist developers							
<p>Identify: Potential funding e.g. HLF, Coastal Communities Fund Potential uses that have fit with DMP market priorities/ Shared Story Planning constraints/policy issues Need for feasibility/ options appraisal Prioritise: Accommodation Fit with Local Plan Quick wins – e.g. meanwhile uses to act as soft market testing for permanent uses</p>	Commence 2013- 2014	TDC (economic development/ planning), KCC, property landowners, VK (market research), Arts Council (meanwhile uses)	Completion of Plan and its use by various stakeholders as the inward investment framework for these buildings Feasibility briefs drawn up Market demand undertaken (VK)	Time Possible need for support to analyse process Feasibility study budget for individual sites Support for meanwhile uses (e.g. Arts Council)	A shortlist of up to 3 large redundant/rundown buildings on the coast with tourism development potential Identification of preferred uses – accommodation prioritised for at least 2 buildings Meanwhile uses/potential identified Site promotional materials produced e.g. photography Promotional materials prepared to promote to target developers and for public sector funding bids Target developers & commercial agents identified	High	Yes

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
2. Produce clear, developer-relevant and distinctive information about tourism investment opportunities - Top 10 Reasons to Invest in Thanet							
<p>Distribute through existing online/offline channels</p> <p>Encourage wide use of investment messages</p> <p>Develop networking events for target property developers, to include visits to specific prioritised sites for tourism development, ensure senior TDC staff, Regeneration Board members, existing new property investors invited/available</p> <p>Pursue specific opportunities e.g. for energy themed visitor attraction</p>	<p>Develop materials 2013</p> <p>Plan industry trips 2014 and deliver 2014/5 – promote and share knowledge with residents and developers. Use networks to share knowledge</p> <p>Produce compelling case and liaise with potential investors – ongoing</p>	<p>TDC, VK, local tourism business investment companies, KCC (Grow For It links), Locate in Kent, commercial agents</p> <p>TDC/Regeneration Board</p>	<p>Site details available online (TDC, KCC, VK, commercial agents)</p> <p>2 network events held during 2014</p> <p>2 networking events held in 2015</p> <p>Investors explore option of building conversion</p>	<p>Champion to facilitate and liaise with partners.</p> <p>Promotional and hosting event</p> <p>Senior staff time</p>	<p>Clear reasons to invest in tourism development in Thanet</p> <p>Raised profile of Thanet tourism investment opportunities among creative property developer/joint venture companies</p> <p>15% increase in numbers of enquiries</p> <p>1 investment secured in 2015 on tourism priority building and a further 2 investments secured by 2017</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
3. Support heritage and special interest groups to become local enablers							
<p>Collate and make available online all recent market research, market profiles reports, e.g. hotel studies, to help inform bid preparation, case studies</p> <p>Develop workshops on how to apply for funding and project management of large projects (make materials available online as well)</p> <p>Involve relevant interest groups in development site audits</p>	<p>Ongoing – some early tasks now and roll on during 2014/5</p> <p>2014/5</p>	<p>TDC, VK (market research support),</p> <p>Town Heritage Groups, MACH (to help identify needs and communication services to others),</p> <p>EH, HLF, Arts Council, East Kent College, VK (project management)</p>	<p>Materials are available online</p> <p>Workshop programme developed</p> <p>Workshops delivered</p>	<p>Time</p> <p>Web content development costs</p> <p>Funding for workshops – potential via EU programmes</p>	<p>35 members of heritage-related groups/ organisations taken part in workshops by 2015</p> <p>Increase in number of HLF bids secured in Thanet in 2016/7</p>	High	Yes

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
4. Staying above the studio pilot – encourage arts SMEs to develop small scale character B&B and self-catering accommodation							
Develop bespoke business advice/training support to enable arts businesses to develop new skills to enable them to develop and manage visitor accommodation	2014	TDC, KCC, VK, Arts Council (business marketing, communications), commercial banks (promote the scheme), East Kent College (business advice), commercial agents (building identification), TDC	Training and advice programme developed	Business advice, training e.g. via EU funding	Up to 24 creative businesses received advice/training on opportunities of setting up a character B&B between 2014-2015	Medium	Yes
Identify potential properties/units with studio + visitor accommodation potential	2014		List of potential buildings/units identified		Property list compiled and promoted by end 2014		
Explore leasehold & management and commercial developer/trust options for larger building (s) to be used for studios+ accommodation units, look at best practice comparables	2015	Private sector/social enterprise partners/TDC/MACH	Premises identified and building management/freehold arrangements identified/agreed		5+ character B&Bs/self-catering properties established by 2017		
	2016		Pilot review (potential EU funding)		Evaluation used as best practice to encourage other parts of East Kent to establish similar schemes		
Review/evaluate pilot	2017	TDC + partners					

Abbreviations - TDC = Thanet District Council; VK = Visit Kent; KCC = Kent County Council, HLF = Heritage Lottery Fund; MACH = Margate Arts, Creativity, Heritage

7 PRIORITY THREE: TELLING OUR STORIES

Telling Our Stories is about making sure that people in Thanet understand and use the Shared Story to develop their offer and communicate and market it; and that people who visit Thanet experience the Shared Story 'promise' - to develop a deeper understanding about Thanet, explore more of it and stay longer.

The Shared Story is a resource for public, private and third sectors, for agencies, community groups and businesses. The more it is used and seen, the more powerful it will become as shorthand for what is special about Thanet. The DMP priority is to make businesses and the community more aware of the Shared Story and equip businesses with the tools to use the Shared Story effectively in ways that work for them. Those businesses include accommodation providers, visitor attractions, restaurants, cafes, shops, events organisers and foreign language schools – every business that has visitors as part of their customer base.

Telling Our Stories is also about making sure that visitors experience the Story once they are in Thanet – so that their expectations are met, and they recommend the experience to others. When it comes to this aspect, the design of the public realm says something about Thanet and its values, creative qualities and identity as well as providing opportunities to tell some of its stories and deliver functional directions between places. Good information on arrival, wayfinding and trails can encourage people to explore further and understand more about the place. Modern technology means not all wayfinding and trails need interpretation boards and signs. Information can be tailored and delivered via smart phones, in different, engaging and interactive ways that require minimal maintenance. The Shared Story provides a way to link together all the elements of wayfinding and trails; it enables joined-up design, yet is also sufficiently flexible to respond to creative ideas and different approaches to fit specific themes, needs and locations.

The key areas of activity are:

- 1. Create a Shared Story Network & Toolkit for tourism businesses** – The network will use the Story to engage and inspire businesses to work together, and to deliver a step-change in the Isle of Thanet's tourism offer. The network will support and encourage cross-promotion between businesses, coordinate digital and resident communications campaigns and peer-to-peer learning. The toolkit will provide rich content to bring the Story to life in images and words, helping businesses deliver quality, coordinated marketing and promotion, and inspiring market-focused product/service improvement.

2. **Create a welcome, signing and trails programme** – to create a stronger sense of place on arrival (i.e. at stations and car parks) and provide visitors with wayfinding and information throughout their stay, to animate physical links along the coast using the Shared Story to inspire themes and design, and to integrate existing trails and walks more strongly with each other and with public transport.

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
1. Shared Story Network & Toolkit							
Network							
<p>Network’s activities to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing businesses about the Story & potential growth markets • Commitment from businesses to ‘sign-up’ to deliver the Story, support each other and cross-promote • ‘Developing Experiences’: a programme of business-to-business peer-learning sessions and familiarisation trips based around the Story A PR network (part of the larger Network) that shares key messages & provides support between organisations 	Autumn 2013 onwards – develop and launch Network	Lead businesses Town groups, Thanet Business Network, ACTS	<p>Business commitment</p> <p>Uptake of Shared Story</p> <p>PR protocol agreed, key messages agreed and widely used</p>	<p>Business time</p> <p>Budget for – web, training, workshops</p> <p>Time from PR experts in various partner agencies and businesses</p>	<p>10 engaged and active businesses involved in establishing the Network in Yr 1</p> <p>By end 2014 - 30 key businesses signed-up to using Shared Story + further 30 involved in learning sessions/familiarisation trips</p> <p>Consistent positive PR messages – at least 3 positive stories p.a. in travel media</p> <p>Stronger, more positive perceptions among key growth markets – measured in next tranche of Visit Kent &/or VisitEngland research</p>	High	High

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
Toolkit							
<p>Develop online words & photos for businesses to download, practical tips, examples of how to apply including colours and design styles if needed. Include work by local artists and photographers where possible.</p> <p>Develop Story/Toolkit workshops in PR, social media, itinerary building</p>	2013/4	Isle magazine, TDC, Turner Contemporary, Visit Kent	<p>Toolkit launched & being used</p> <p>Programme of workshops successfully delivered</p>	Budget for toolkit and workshops	<p>Shared Story understood and used by at least 60 Thanet businesses by end of 2014</p> <p>Improved and consistent perceptions of Thanet as a place to visit – at least 3 positive stories p.a. in travel media from 2014 onwards</p>	High	High
Digital Marketing including Social Media – to attract new growth markets, and for businesses to become more customer-focused							
<p>For destination & businesses targeting new target markets - includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excellent search engine optimisation • 'sticky' and rich content, constantly updated • user generated content and reviews. 	2014	TDC, Turner Contemporary, Visit Kent	<p>Key websites and social media channels 'optimised' for searching using key words from the Story</p> <p>Shared Story content on external sites</p>	<p>Professional SEO support</p> <p>Business time to develop and generate content – may need professional writers too</p>	<p>Better search engine rankings – improved market perceptions and more visits</p> <p>100% increase in number of high-quality leads generated via digital destination marketing by 2015</p>	High	High

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
Local Community Campaign – to support and grow local pride in Thanet as a place to visit							
Activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special tours • Big Thanet weekend – offers for community • Offers from businesses • Local media coverage • 'My Thanet' – online place to share • Viral – Thanet and around the world • Badges to share 'around Thanet in 80 hours' 	2014	Kent & Thanet Greeters Visit Kent Local media Local public figures/ celebrities	Tours start Launch BIG Thanet weekend	Kent Greeters Marketing budget Local paper to support and publicise Business involvement e.g. discounts TIC website	Local community as ambassadors – 300+ take part in first Big Thanet weekend	Medium	High

Activity	Timeframe	Partners	Milestones	Resources	Outcomes/ Achievements	Priority	Shared Story Fit
2. Welcome, signing and trails programme							
<p>Set up task & finish delivery group – develop visitor pass/ticketing to encourage visitors to travel around Thanet</p> <p>Improve pedestrian wayfinding from stations to town centres</p> <p>Improve visitor information at gateways (stations & car parks)</p> <p>Integrate existing trails and walks more strongly with each other & public transport links</p> <p>Develop themed trails, walks and itineraries and promote on Visit Thanet – themes to include arts, nature and wildlife.</p>	<p>2014 – establish group, seek sponsorship</p> <p>2014 – develop integrated ticketing initiatives</p> <p>2014 - Identify and develop themed short walks using existing coastal paths e.g. Viking Way and public transport</p> <p>Develop online materials.</p> <p>2015/6 – wayfinding programme</p>	<p>TDC, Southeastern, Visit Kent, Southern Water, KCC Highways, MACH, town teams and heritage groups</p>	<p>Groups set up</p> <p>Private sector funding achieved</p> <p>Visitor pass/ticketing launched</p> <p>Walks routes agreed</p> <p>Gateways and wayfinding improved</p>	<p>Private sector sponsorship/in-kind support</p> <p>TDC</p> <p>For walks and trails work Local volunteers/ students/ public transport providers</p>	<p>Group established</p> <p>Downloadable themed walks x 8</p> <p>New pedestrian wayfinding introduced at 1 station in 2014 and other 2 stations by 2015.</p> <p>Visitors explore further and off beaten track – supporting more remote businesses</p> <p>Strong uptake of visitor pass/ticketing</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High</p>

Abbreviations - TDC = Thanet District Council; VK = Visit Kent; KCC = Kent County Council, HLF = Heritage Lottery Fund; MACH = Margate Arts, Creativity, Heritage; ACTS = Action Committee for Thanet Students

8 MAKING IT HAPPEN

DELIVERY RESOURCES

The DMP is about new tourism activity in Thanet and about a new way of partnership working. It is essential that there is sufficient funding and people resource to make it happen. The early years are one of the biggest challenges for any destination making a step change because the success of new initiatives is not proven.

Thanet District Council will identify resources to facilitate the delivery of the DMP. The Council will support an industry leader to provide executive leadership for a DMP Steering Group with public sector and industry membership. A key initial role of this post will be to set up and facilitate the new Project Delivery Groups and provide leadership to move forward DMP projects. The executive leadership post will be supported by an enhanced Council tourism team. This will enable greater co-ordination and facilitation and provide delivery support for the DMP Steering Group.

The DMP will convene an industry event twice a year to discuss progress and share achievements.

Thanet will also look at ways to generate ongoing funding for the DMP, which might include the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) or similar delivery and partnership structure for tourism on the coast and for the three towns. The objective is to generate additional private sector funds to deliver and support the DMP, to fund the leadership post longer-term and contribute to match funding for project funding bids.

THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE DMP

It is essential that the DMP delivers from day one to maintain the momentum of collaborative working between partners which has characterised the development process and to inspire confidence more widely in the industry that this DMP is about making things happen.

The Project Group identified 10 actions that can happen quickly, that kick-off some of the high priority projects, get people working together and provide real benefits to the tourism industry. These actions are to:

1. Establish a Beach User Group for Thanet and local branches and hold inaugural meetings
2. Identify priority issues and plan lobbying and action - The Beach User Group to lead
3. Undertake an audit of Thanet's beach facilities and users to inform a beach by beach approach to management and development
4. Prioritise the top 5 coastal regeneration sites for tourism and commission photography for promotional activity which illustrates the potential of the sites
5. Identify 5 local entrepreneurs to profile and showcase priority coastal regeneration sites
6. Collate information and guidance on funding opportunities for heritage buildings, make available online and communicate through bespoke workshops to relevant groups across Thanet
7. Develop the Shared Story marketing toolkit for businesses
8. Commission photography to create an image library for tourism businesses to use
9. Develop training for tourism businesses on how to develop effective websites, write good promotional text and use social media
10. Incorporate marketing activity for the new market segment into the Tourism Marketing Plan for 2014.

Disclaimer: All information and analysis supplied by Blue Sail Consulting Ltd and our sub-contractors is done in good faith and represents our professional judgement based on the information obtained from the client and elsewhere. The achievement of recommendations, forecasts and valuations depend on factors beyond our control. Any projections, financial or otherwise, in this report are only intended to illustrate particular points of argument and do not constitute forecasts of actual performance