



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 22 nd March 2022	<u>Item</u> 8
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SHROPSHIRE DRAFT DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022 - 2025

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Summary

This paper updates members on the draft Shropshire Destination Management Plan which has recently been prepared by consultants following stakeholder consultations.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note the production of the draft Plan and the summary presented here and to offer comments.

Background

The Shropshire Destination Management Plan is the blueprint for how the county intends to manage its visitor economy between 2022 and 2025. Shropshire has not had a whole county tourism plan for some years. Under the leadership of Shropshire Council, a new partnership is emerging comprising people and organisations from across the public and private sectors with a stake in future success. Collectively, this partnership has identified priorities and related actions that will begin to transform Shropshire as a visitor destination.

The tourism sector has been hit hard by the Covid pandemic, and Shropshire’s recovery plan aims to support the sector to thrive, promote partnerships with related sectors, particularly culture and landscape management, to become a credible regional player on tourism initiatives as part of the West Midlands and the Marches LEP area, and ensure that Shropshire can take advantage of future funding opportunities at the national level.

The draft Destination Management Plan has been influenced by county strategies including the Economic Growth Strategy, Cultural Strategy, Great Outdoors Strategy and Climate Change Strategy, and also by the Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

The vision set out is *“To create a welcoming and sustainable visitor economy that celebrates the natural beauty of our landscape and its role in health and wellbeing, that promotes the contribution of Shropshire in the history of world-changing ideas, that offers unique towns and villages with a refreshing independence of spirit and that safeguards all these assets for generations to come.”*

Principles of Partnership and Sustainability will underpin the plan, and development of the sector will aim to balance the needs of the Visitor, the Environment, Residents and Businesses.

Eight interdependent priorities have been identified as important for Shropshire's future success:

1. Develop a strong evidence base to support future decision making
2. Improve digital infrastructure for tourism businesses
3. Increase the appeal of the county for visiting families
4. Adjust the ratio between day and staying visitors from 90:10 to 80:20
5. Become an exemplar destination for sustainable tourism
6. Adopt an attract and disperse approach to regional and national marketing.
7. Increase Shropshire's reputation for quality and excellence through product development
8. Build a reputation for delivering high service standards and a warm visitor welcome

Following further consultation with relevant stakeholders (including a meeting on 4th March) the Plan will be finalised and then implemented by partners. It will be a reference document for future funding and a basis for bids into government programmes and can be used by developers and tourism businesses to shape their investment. The list of priorities and actions is intentionally short so that success can be easily tracked and attributed. The plan will be reviewed in Autumn 2023.

The AONB Partnership team has been closely involved especially through Nigel McDonald our Sustainable Tourism Officer. The good recognition of the AONB and the landscape and environment of Shropshire more generally is welcomed, along with the strong adoption of sustainable tourism principles through the Plan.

List of Background Papers None
Human Rights Act Appraisal The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.
Environmental Appraisal The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.
Risk Management Appraisal Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.
Community / Consultations Appraisal The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.
Appendices None