

Agenda Item No: 9.3 **Report No:** 49/15
Report Title: Strategic Tourism Vision Implementation 2015

Report To: Cabinet **Date:** 19 March 2015
Cabinet Member: Cllr Tom Jones
Ward(s) Affected: All
Report By: Nazeya Hussain, Director of Business Strategy and Development
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Purpose of Report:

To report back to Cabinet on the phased action programme for Year One of the Strategic Tourism Action Plan 2015 - 2018, which forms the foundation for a new approach to delivering our visitor information services across the district in line with changing visitor expectations. The Action Plan aims to ensure we remain a vibrant and attractive destination for future visitors.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1** For Cabinet to note the phased action programme for Year 1 of the Strategic Tourism Action Plan 2015 - 2018 at Appendix 1.
 - 2** For Cabinet to agree the locations for four pilot visitor information points.
 - 3** For Cabinet to approve the design concept of the visitor information points [VIPs] using the new South Downs National Park Authority [SDNPA] shared identity.
 - 4** For Cabinet to note that 'Stay Lewes,' the destination website for the district, has been extended for a further year and has been mobile device enabled.
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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Officers have been working on the phased action programme for Year 1 of the Strategic Tourism Action Plan that was approved by Cabinet in September 2014. This has included exploring locations and developing partnerships for a first pilot round of visitor information points and working with SDNPA on the appropriate design concepts using the shared visual identity. Accessible and sustainable locations for the pilot locations have been selected.

Our Stay Lewes website has been continued for 2015, to ensure our service to visitors and tourism businesses is maintained for this year. Officers have been looking at a range of viable alternatives, including the www.bestofsussex.com, a new local business and have spoken to Brighton & Hove City Council about their experiences of operating Visit Brighton, a council/business partnership model.

INFORMATION

- 2 In September 2014 Cabinet received a report on the future of tourism and visitor services in the district, including agreeing a new high level Strategic Tourism Vision. This vision highlighted the way we can work more efficiently and effectively over the next 3 to 4 years, using available resources to modernise the service in line with visitor demand and expectation. It set out that web-based digital marketing should be the prominent visitor destination, event and attractions vehicle, complemented by a limited but targeted printing of maps, visitor guides and event information to enable visitors to self-serve as they chose, as well as helping those who cannot or chose not to.

- 2.1 The following recommendations were approved at that Cabinet meeting:

- (a) To approve the Strategic Tourism Vision and Action Plan 2015 - 2018
- (b) To authorise Officers to develop a more detailed and phased action programme and report back to Cabinet in March 2015.

- 2.2 Appendix one of this report includes an update on the detailed actions of year 1 of the three-year phased action plan.

Visitor Information Points:

- 2.3 Officers have progressed the partnership work with SDNPA, confirming the sites of four bespoke visitor information points [VIP's] in key locations in the district:
 - (a) Gateway café in the Centenary Park, Peacehaven (opening March 2015)
 - (b) Ditchling Museum café (opened September, 2013)

- (c) Seaford Library (opened August, 2014)
- (d) Newhaven Library (opening March 2015)

- 2.4** These proposed locations for the first series of VIP's are shown on the map at Appendix 2. This map illustrates that most of the main settlements are included. After this initial pilot, we will roll out the VIP approach to visitor information across the district.
- 2.5** Officers have drawn up 'Agreements in Principal' for partner organisations; Peacehaven Town Council, Ditchling Museum, East Sussex County Council with LDC and SDNPA to host the VIPs subject to specific terms and conditions agreed by all parties.
- 2.6** Officers have been working alongside SDNPA's Interpretation Officer, and have commissioned a high quality design specification from HDK design company using SDNPA's shared identity toolkit, both practical and appropriate to each location. [See Appendix 3]. These VIP's will act as exemplars for SDNPA, being the first in the National Park using the shared identity. Whilst three of the four pilot locations are not in the National Park, the decision has been made to work with SDNPA and to use their identity because in many cases the locations in question act as gateways to the park.
- 2.7** The design and quality of the VIP's fits to the specification of the four different sites, complementing their open plan, contemporary architectural design. However, the adaptable and simple design is suited to a range of indoor locations. They will have an identity that ties in with the overall feel of the branding for the park, while retaining the potential for local distinctiveness.
- 2.8** The partnerships created and secured for the VIP's serve as solid foundations for further development and partnership working in Year 2 and 3 of the Visitor Services Action Plan.

Other Information

2.9 Displays

- (a)** Officers have been working with Sussex Community Rail Partnership, Southern Rail and local Town Councils on content, design and installation of large size visitor information 'Welcome' maps showing places to visit in railway stations in Seaford, Newhaven, Plumpton and Lewes.
- (b)** The 'Welcome to Seaford' map [Appendix 4] will be printed and installed in March 2015. This is being funded by Southern Rail. Negotiations are in place for the two further information maps to be designed, printed and installed in June/July 2015.

2.10 Stay Lewes Website

- (a) The Council's destination website, '[Stay Lewes](#),' has been retained for a further year to January 2016. LDC has extended the contract with New Vision Group, who provides the data managed service, Guestlink booking system and data stewardship for the site. This will enable networked Tourist Information Centres across the country, to continue to book and recommend quality assessed accommodation in our district, as well enabling visitors to book on-line while officers investigate and assess viable options for implementation in 2016.
- (b) The Stay Lewes website has been enabled for mobile devices from January 2015. Twitter training has been organised for TIC staff in April 2015 to maximise the potential to use social media to notify potential visitors and residents about attractions and events in the district and around.
- (c) Officers are working with committee representatives from Lewes Town & Country B&B, an independent group of over 50 B&B's and self-catering establishments, to include all of their members on the Stay Lewes website from April 2015.
- (d) The development of a new digital offer for visitor services, including the potential for apps as well as a traditional website is to be further explored in year 2 of the Action Plan as well as assist local tourism businesses to access digital marketing expertise; look at digital relationships with neighbouring destination web sites and portal sites; and look for opportunities on third party high-profile web sites such as the Ferry Company. Work is ongoing on this, including working with colleagues in Dieppe and the surrounding region to look at how we can better tie together the digital provision for visitors on each side of the Channel.

Financial Appraisal

- 3 The cost of the actions taken to date has been met by existing budgets for Tourism Activity. As shown in Appendix 1, feasibility studies are currently being carried out in respect of a range of activities and provision, with reports anticipated in Spring/early Summer 2015. Full financial appraisals will be undertaken as part of those studies and included within follow up reports for Cabinet decision.

Legal Implications

- 4 None arising from this report

Sustainability Implications

- 5 Questionnaire submitted on 9 February 2015

Risk Management Implications

6 I have completed a risk assessment.

6.1 The following risks will arise if the recommendations are not implemented, and I propose to mitigate these risks in the following ways: (to be completed)

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Tourism service continues to be delivered in the traditional static way.	High	High	Improvement of website, development of a social media marketing campaign

6.2 The following risks will arise if the recommendations are implemented, and I propose to mitigate these risks in the following ways (to be completed)

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Publicity surrounding the potential of re provisioning the TIC service	High	Medium	Prepare a Comms strategy expressing the need for change.

Equality Screening

7 The proposals have only positive, or zero, impacts on equality.

Background Papers

8 Lewes District Strategic Tourism Action Plan 2015 – 2018

Appendices

9 Appendix 1 - Welcoming Visitors – Year 1 of phased action programme

Appendix 2 - Map of Proposed Pilot Visitor Information Points

Appendix 3 - HDK design concept for visitor information points

Appendix 4 - 'Welcome to Seaford' visitor information map

Appendix 5 - Details relating to visitor information points – Leaflet Display

Appendix 1 - Welcoming Visitors: Year 1 of phased action programme

Action	Milestones & Indicators	Next Steps	Progress
1. Visitor Information Provision			
Explore options for future provision of TIC services, district wide.	Production of completed study & recommendations into TIC services	Create and implement detailed plans for the future of each TIC. To feed into TIC report.	In progress, report expected in Spring/early Summer 2015
Investigate the provision of an information centre service based at Southover House		Evaluation of pilot visitor information points. Feasibility study of alternative locations within Lewes. Reception at Southover House or possible partnership arrangements to feed into TIC report.	In progress, report expected in Spring/early Summer 2015
Look at the feasibility of a mobile TIC service.		Research and feasibility appraisal of a LDC wide mobile TIC service. To cover core locations, key events and to be used as a distribution vehicle to the VIPs. To feed into TIC report.	Discussions and research in progress with SDNPA and investigation into the Central Sussex LEADER programme for potential funding sources.
Feasibility of official satellite LDC managed Tourist Information Point (VIP) sites – with phone-link/display-only options.		Identification of potential sites, feasibility study, what legal MOU/SLA agreements needed. Evaluation of these pilots to feed into TIC report.	Successful discussion with SDNPA on locations of four pilot VIP sites identified, using SDNP new visual identity and branding, 'agreement in principle' prepared for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Parks Project Gateway Café, Peacehaven; • Ditchling Museum Café; • Seaford Library; • Newhaven Library. Bespoke design concept for pilot VIPs created as 'exemplar' projects for the new shared SDNPA identity.
Explore potential for information desks and displays within partner locations, independently managed but LDC supported		Work up concept with possible partners, feasibility study any agreements needed. E.g. in hotels, visitor attractions, retail shops etc. To feed into TIC report.	Agreed the pilot of large scale visitor information map, funded in partnership with Southern Rail Partnership and Seaford Town Council in Seaford Railway station. Installation in March 2015.

			Further plans for similar visitor information maps in railway stations in Newhaven and Lewes by August 2015.
Inform and consult with wider tourism industry about changes and transition of the TIC service	Prior to production of TIC report.	Communications plan with public and partners/stakeholders	In progress, report expected in Spring/early Summer 2015
2. Destination Marketing			
Look at the viability of continuing with an annual printed destination guide and its distribution	Immediate. Marketing programme and methodology need preparing for 2015 Season.	SLA for outsourcing of production of guide (including distribution), mobile enabled website and social media. Identify seed-corn funding profile on a reducing basis for contract period.	The Stay Lewes website has been extended for a further year to enable more detailed research and development into viable alternatives.
Ensure the Visit Lewes website is fully enabled for mobile devices			Annual printed guide not printed for 2015 as the existing guide covers 2014 – 2015 and can be reprinted as required. Stay Lewes, our current website for accommodation and attractions has been fully enabled for mobile devices from January 2015.
Develop a social media strategy, specifically a Visit Lewes, Twitter and blog opportunities			Social media strategy in progress – April 2015 TIC staff training in Twitter set up in April 2015.
Integrate Lewes independent B&B Group content within the official destination web site		Contact Independent B&B group with proposals	Independent B&B group approached to invite their businesses onto the Stay Lewes website at special discounted rate from 1 April 2015 – 1 April 2016. Independent B&B Group committee are considering offer and we are awaiting decision.
3. Events and Attractions – ongoing			
			Working with Business, Strategy and Performance team on the completion of Outdoor Events Policy and marketing of the district for events. Continued promotion of local festivals and sales of event tickets in both TIC's

			Artwave 2015 (22 August-6 September) – applications open 1 April 2015.
4. Local Business Engagement			
Create a definitive database of tourism related businesses and contact points	Completed database	Compile list, cross-check with directories and databases. Maintain list and key information including email addresses.	Ongoing updating of business database
5. Wider Partnerships			
Finalise exit from Enjoy Sussex Partnership		Immediately complete exit.	Exit from Enjoy Sussex Partnership completed in 2014.
6. Research and Intelligence			
Collect data from businesses on market segments and reasons to visit.	Access to industry data	Identify key industry contacts that will share data. Possibly via focus group methodology.	To begin data collection in June/July
7. Quality and Skills			

Appendix 2: Map of Proposed Pilot Visitor Information Points

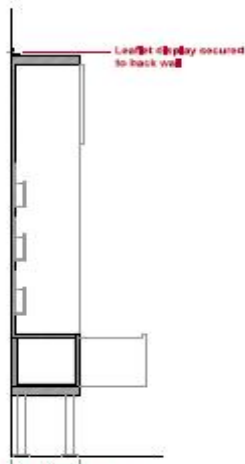


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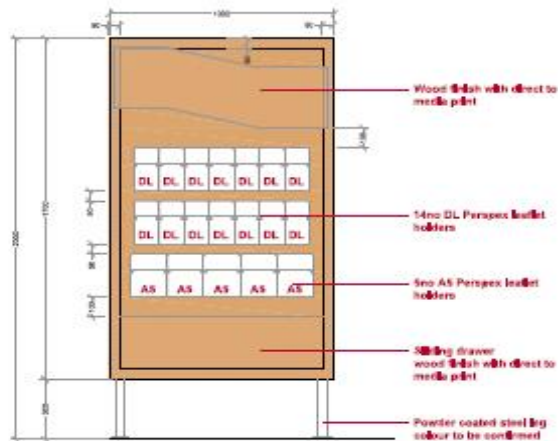
- Locations of pilot visitor information points

Appendix 3: HDK flexible design concept for visitor information points with examples from SDNPA shared identity toolkit

Design concept 1



8 Leaflet display
SECTION 1:20@ A3



9 Leaflet display
ELEVATION 1:20@ A3



13 Leaflet display visual
REFERENCE IMAGE



10 Leaflet holder
REFERENCE IMAGE



11 Drawer elevation
ELEVATION 1:10@ A3

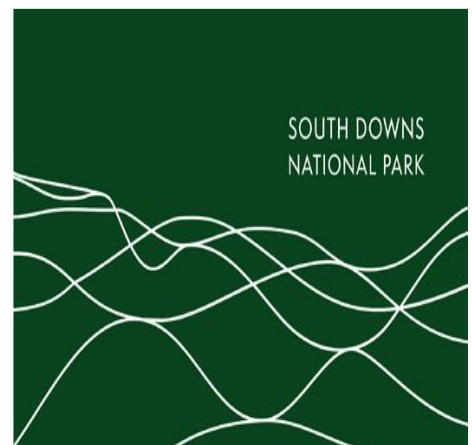


12 Drawer plan
PLAN 1:10@ A3

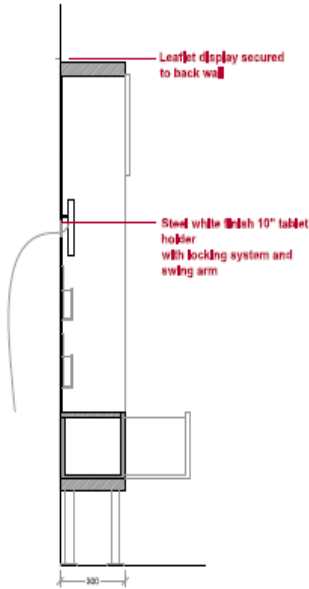


14 Drawer handle
REFERENCE IMAGE

SDNPA – shared identity toolkit examples

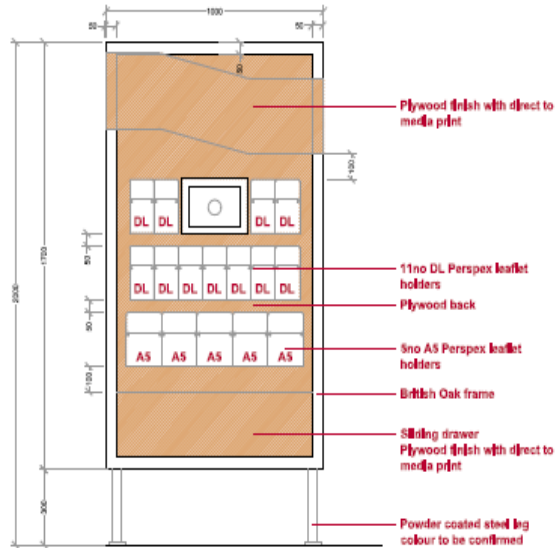


Design Concept 2 – interactive with shared identity



8 Leaflet display

SECTION 1:20@ A3



11 Leaflet display

ELEVATION 1:20@ A3



13 Leaflet display visual

REFERENCE IMAGE



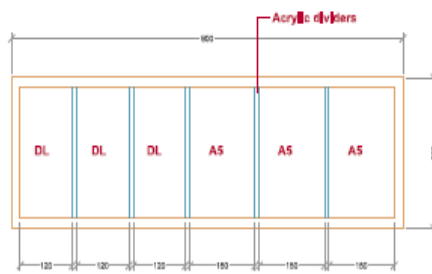
9 Tablet holder

REFERENCE IMAGE



10 Leaflet holder

REFERENCE IMAGE



12 Drawer plan

PLAN 1:10@ A3



14 Drawer handle

REFERENCE IMAGE

Appendix 4: Draft Visitor Information Map – Welcome to Seaford

WELCOME TO SEAFORD

Nestled at the foot of the iconic Seven Sisters and a gateway to South Downs National Park, the town is a delight for visitors and residents alike. Offering gentle seafront walks and unspoilt beaches; challenging climbs and rides on Seaford Head; a range of different sport and play in open spaces and indoor facilities; an art gallery in an ancient Crypt and a Museum in a 200 year old Martello Tower! Plus two small theatres, a range of shops and a choice of great places to eat, drink and stay over.

