

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**
 Date of meeting: **24th March 2021**
 Report Subject: **Destination Management Plan Update**
 Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**
 Report Submitted by: **Owen Ashton, Service Manager – Business & Regeneration**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Executive Committee | Council | Other (please state) |
| 02.03.21 | 04.03.21 | 11.03.21 | | | 24.03.21 | 14.04.21 | | |

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request Members endorsement of the draft Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan (Plan) for 2020-25.
- 1.2 The report provides a summary of the Plan’s content and the Themes around which it is based. The report also summarises the context in which the Plan sits, and the role of the Destination Management Partnership and other stakeholders in its production.

2. Background and Current Position

- 2.1 The Destination Management Plan is a strategic document that sets out priorities for tourism development in Blaenau Gwent over the period 2020-2025 and complements the new Visit Wales Tourism Action Plan over the same period.
- 2.2 The Plan has been co-produced by a number of stakeholders and has been overseen by the Destination Management Partnership which includes the following Members: Cllr Phil Edwards, Cllr Mandy Moore, Cllr Lee Parsons, as well as representatives from the public, private and third sectors.
- 2.3 The BGDMP differs from many strategic documents in that the ownership and delivery sits with both BGCBC, the Destination Management Partnership and stakeholders across the tourism sector – it is not solely a Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council document.
- 2.4 The BGDMP is recognised by Visit Wales as the strategic document for tourism within a geographical area and will help support funding applications.
- 2.5 The BGDMP aims to ensure that people, businesses and organisations work together in a coordinated way to deliver agreed targets and priorities for investment. The Plan contains eight chapters including an Introduction to Destination Management, Strategic Context, a SWOT analysis, a review of the 2016-19 BGDMP, Covid-19 implications, Strategic Priorities and the Action Plan.

2.6 The Plan identifies six Cross Cutting Themes and five main Themes. The cross cutting Themes are:

- Business Development
- Challenging and Changing Perceptions,
- Partnership Working,
- Research and Analysis,
- Skills
- Transport

2.7 The main Themes are:

- Business Tourism;
- Culture, Heritage including the NHS & Genealogy;
- Events
- Green/Eco Tourism including Outdoor Activity & Trails
- Town Centres.

2.8 The BGDMP and associated Action Plan have taken account of national, strategic and local trends and priorities, and has been co-produced and informed by stakeholders and partner organisations. Should the Plan be endorsed, it's proposed that it will be formatted into an appropriate marketing/promotional document with photographs and other imagery.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Option one – The BGDMP 2020-25 is endorsed.

3.2 Option two – The BGDMP 2020-25 is endorsed with amendments requested.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board: Established in April 2016, and is currently working towards preparing a Well-being Plan for the area. Tourism will offer an opportunity in Blaenau Gwent to help the area contribute towards the long-term future of the area.

4.2 The Blaenau Gwent Local Plan 2018-2022
The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (Section 15), places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. As part of this, the Council is required to develop a Corporate Plan. The priorities developed for the Corporate Plan incorporate the previous Council Well-being Objectives and also represent our Improvement Objectives, as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget (*short and long term impact*)

- 5.1.1 The proposed BGDMP 2020-25 has been co-produced with a range of stakeholders and the Destination Management Partnership.
- 5.1.2 The Action Plan will be delivered collaboratively with the identified partners, who will also have responsibility for sourcing the necessary funding, with support from the DMP Officer as appropriate. Where the Authority is the identified lead, the project will be funded via internal budgets e.g. Destination Management and where necessary external funding opportunities will be explored.
- 5.1.3 The Plan will support the Authority in making funding applications to external funding bodies including Welsh Government, Visit Wales and others, to deliver projects.
- 5.1.4 Any priorities identified within the action plan requiring additional funding will be reported as appropriate, identifying any potential impact on BGCBC resources.
- 5.1.5 Retention of the Destination Management budget is essential to supporting the five-year delivery of the Blaenau Gwent DMP.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

- 5.2.1 The DMP is Blaenau Gwent's strategic document to support destination related activity. Without such a plan there is a risk to the authority and other stakeholders in terms of securing funding to deliver projects.

Reduction in available staff resources will impact upon the Council's ability to implement activity contained within the action plan.

- 5.2.2 There is a risk of partner organisations not prioritising agreed actions which will negatively impact upon the implementation of the overall plan.

Failure of local tourism stakeholders to engage in the Destination Management Partnership will result in a weak monitoring of the Plan. The Destination Management Officer will dedicate time to strengthening the partnership membership.

5.3 *Legal*

- 5.3.1 There are no legal implications to the development of the BGDMP. Any activities arising as a result of the plan will be delivered within existing legal governance arrangements.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

5.4.1 Destination Management related activity will be undertaken and co-ordinated through the Council's Destination Management Officer.

5.4.2 The Destination Management Officer is a critical role to ensuring the effective co-ordination and implementation of the plan.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.1.1 Nationally - The plan referenced Welsh Government's / Visit Wales new tourism framework and The Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

6.1.2 Regionally – South Wales Tourism Forum, South East Wales Destination Management Group and South East Wales Destination Implementation Group

6.1.3 Locally - Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board, the Blaenau Gwent Local Plan 2018-2022 and the Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

6.2.1 The BGDMP could benefit local businesses, residents and visitors alike through developing a more prosperous economy, pleasant environment and inspiring pride in our heritage.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Destination Management Partnership meet quarterly at various venues across the County Borough. The group has increased membership and is a strong and cohesive voice for local tourism.

6.3.1 The Destination Management Officer regularly engages with stakeholders and the community to ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon.

6.3.2 This Plan was developed by the Partnership and consultation has been undertaken with the BGCBC and wider tourism stakeholders. There has not been the opportunity to undertake a public consultation due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

6.3.3 All views have been considered by the Partnership and based on this, the plan has been amended accordingly.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

6.4.1 The BGDMP lifetime has been extended from 3 years to 5 years to allow the partnership to take a long term vision for tourism.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

- 6.5.1 Without a Destination Management Plan for Blaenau Gwent there will be no focus and monitoring of tourism delivery in the area. Regular business and community engagement addresses issues at an early stage or prevents them occurring in the first place.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

- 6.6.1 The Local Authority works collaboratively with Welsh Government, other local authorities, local businesses, trusts, public bodies and the voluntary sector in delivering the Destination Management Plan. In Blaenau Gwent we are working together to deliver the Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan through the community, stakeholders and the Destination Management Partnership.

Officers of the Council are represented on the South Wales Tourism Forum, South East Wales Destination Management Group and South East Wales Destination Implementation Group who link to the City Region board.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

- 6.7.1 Prosperous - The Destination Management Plan aims to improve the profitability of business performance through building the capacity of the industry.
- 6.7.2 Healthier - walking and activities in the outdoors through the development of walking and cycling routes will benefit the physical and mental wellbeing of the community and visitors.
- 6.7.3 Equal- By making recreational activities accessible to all.
- 6.7.4 Culture & Language - Through the use of the Welsh language in all our promotional materials and on line and celebrating our heritage and culture.
- 6.7.5 Globally Responsible - By protecting and promoting our unique natural and built environment, encouraging use of sustainable transport and supporting businesses in securing the Green Dragon environmental standard awarded to organisations that are taking action to control their impacts on the environment.

6.8 ***EqIA***

- 6.8.1 The BGDMP embraces all residents and visitors. It has no adverse impact on people or groups from the nine protected characteristics.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 The BGDMP is monitored quarterly through the Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Partnership which receives updates on the progress made and forward planning.
- 7.2 Annual updates are provided to Scrutiny Committee and Executive every and on request.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 - The Draft Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan 2020-25