

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



# DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

2022-2027

## INTRODUCTION

Since the last Destination Management Plan (DMP) was produced, significant change has taken place at global, national and local levels, with the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit and rises in the cost of living. All of these have had implications for the tourism and hospitality industries. The current challenges present a great opportunity for the preparation of a refreshed DMP to help move towards recovery.

Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has identified tourism as part of its foundational economy with a recovery response that includes additional funding streams, public amenity projects, infrastructure upgrades and support for the accommodation sector. Whilst much has changed, there is also much potential for the future.

The economic benefit of tourism to Bridgend County Borough in 2019 was estimated at £363 million (STEAM, 2019). Visit Britain's Tourism Recovery Plan is to recover 2019 levels of tourism revenue by 2023.

The DMP is a shared statement of intent to manage Bridgend County Borough as a successful visitor destination between 2022 and 2027. BCBC will work in partnership with Visit Wales, regional entities such as Cardiff Capital Region and the Valleys Regional Park, neighbouring authorities and key stakeholders such as town and community councils, accommodation providers, tourist attractions, activity providers and other local businesses that support the visitor economy.

## THE WIDER CONTEXT - NATIONAL LEVEL

'Welcome to Wales' sets out Welsh Government's priorities for the visitor economy in Wales over the period 2020-2025. The ambition is to 'grow tourism for the good of Wales' meaning economic growth that delivers benefits for people and places, including environmental sustainability, social and cultural enrichment and health benefits.

The strategy has the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 at its core and reflects the need to strike the right balance between economic growth and wider wellbeing. It highlights challenges relating to over-tourism, the climate emergency and Brexit (supplemented now by recovery from the pandemic and rises in the cost of living). The strategy states that future direction is about harnessing the visitor economy for wider gain.

Key priorities for Wales are:



**Great products and places** – Visit Wales-led projects, industry-led capital investment, integrated placemaking, international home-grown events, including business events



**Quality visitor experiences** – Brilliant basics, great hospitality through grading, food tourism, skilled people, product-led teams



**An innovative Cymru Wales brand** – a stronger nation brand, adaptive marketing with an off-peak focus, one campaign and two-themed years, digital-first industry, Visit Wales 'Centre of Excellence'



**An engaged and vibrant sector** – effective industry engagement through a collective industry voice, improved data and insights based on industry need, stronger strategy and policy function, and agile and responsive Visit Wales.

**A two-pronged approach has been identified to interpret Wales in a fresh, relevant and contemporary way, to retain existing visitors and to attract new and future audiences.**

These two elements are categorised as 'Bro' (meaning local community, a sense of purpose and place) and 'Byd' (meaning international levels of quality standards and ambition). The 'Bro' element is of particular relevance to Bridgend County Borough, which aspires to achieve:

- experiences with a Welsh sense of place
- friendly, welcoming communities
- a showcase for Welsh food and drink
- clean, green destinations
- driving local economies and supply-chains
- accessible and inclusive, delivering value for money
- open year-round, across all parts of Wales
- growing home-grown businesses
- celebrating the Welsh language

Challenges and barriers identified at national level, which are also relevant to the Bridgend context include visitor volume and patterns, particularly the need to optimise visitor statistics in relation to seasonality, spread and spend; and visitor experience, especially the need to get 'the basics' right.

Success will be measured through a series of metrics – including overnight visitor spend, employment in the tourism sector, seasonal spread of visitors and spend, digital trends such as booking and searching for holidays in Wales for example. Other methods include the development of a new Visit Wales survey approach.

## LOCAL LEVEL

BCBC has recently produced a new Economic Strategy for the County Borough. The vision for the County's economic future is to meet its potential by ensuring a highly skilled workforce, strong connectivity infrastructure and thriving business culture, whilst fostering an environment that meets the wider social needs of all its people and in a sustainable manner. The following ambitions are identified to turn the vision into reality, all of which have relevance for Bridgend's visitor economy:

- supporting business growth
- capacity building across Bridgend-based businesses and the wider labour force
- addressing skills shortages
- stimulating high-skilled jobs in the future economy and boosting regional integration
- shifting to a low-carbon economy
- preserving and enhancing ecological/natural capital
- future-proofing education
- strengthening the role for the public service and the foundational economy

The Strategy organises the recommended actions under **four pillars**, in order to attract a diversified industry in a highly competitive global environment and overcome deep-rooted socio-economic challenges.



**CONNECTIVITY AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE**



**BUSINESS AND  
WORKFORCE SUPPORT**



**PUBLIC SECTOR AND  
FOUNDATIONAL ECONOMY**



**LOW CARBON  
ECONOMY**





The Replacement Bridgend Local Development Plan 2018 to 2033 (LDP) is currently being prepared by BCBC and will be central to the development of tourist attractions and relevant infrastructure as well as the protection of existing assets and resources. The LDP outlines the key regeneration and landmark placemaking initiatives for the town centres of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg. It also proposes a comprehensive list of strategic objectives to help enhance the local character of smaller settlements, improve green and blue infrastructure, optimise the integrity of transport and active travel connections, and encourage a balanced mix of various developments.

## ABOUT BRIDGEND

**Bridgend County Borough is a diverse area stretching from the upland, rugged former coal mining valleys in the north, down to the gentler countryside and attractive coast in the south.**

These three distinctive areas are described here:

- 1. The Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore Valleys** are narrow river valleys that converge at Sarn and stretch northwards for over seven miles. With Maesteg as a principal settlement, the valleys accommodate former mining communities with distinctive industrial heritage and natural scenery. A notable asset is the Celtic Trail which follows the southern boundary of this area.
- 2. Bridgend** itself is a medium sized market town served by the M4 corridor from Pyle to Pencoed. Bridgend town centre contains a significant concentration of employment activity including budget hotel accommodation. Tourist activities include shopping (notably visits to the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet on the northern outskirts of the town centre) or attending events held in the town itself.
- 3. Porthcawl** is a small traditional seaside resort which formerly served as a port for the iron and coal industries of the valleys. The town accommodates beachgoers and recreational tourists with its network of seven bays, beaches and extensive dune systems at Kenfig to the west and Merthyr Mawr to the east.

**Outdoor recreation** is a strong theme for Bridgend County Borough due to the County's mixture of beaches, rural landscape, rivers and natural reserves. Coastal assets facilitate a wide range of water sports including surfing, kite-surfing, wind surfing, kayaking, sailing, sea fishing, swimming and motor boating of various kinds. Porthcawl in particular, demonstrates its strength as a surfing destination. Over the last decade, Porthcawl has undergone a significant transformation to attract surfers and further raise its profile against the likes of Newquay or the Gower. Porthcawl has benefitted greatly from the development of Rest Bay Watersports Centre, and future improvements are earmarked under the Porthcawl Placemaking Strategy (for example the development of Cosy Corner).

**Golfing** has a long history in Bridgend with solid performance demonstrated over several decades. Bridgend County boasts a network of several golf courses which feature spectacular views across the Bristol Channel and are of championship standard designs. Most notably Royal Porthcawl is ranked first in Wales and 45th in the world and has hosted numerous championships of international significance. Bridgend County Borough is emerging as a leading sustainable golf destination in Wales and is home to two GEO certified golf courses (out of 25 across the UK), namely Royal Porthcawl and Pyle and Kenfig Golf Club.



Exciting plans and proposals for the future within Bridgend County Borough include:

- transformative plans to revitalise the retail and leisure offering of Bridgend town centre as outlined in the Bridgend Masterplan.
- the renovation of **Maesteg Town Hall** and the relocation of markets under sheltered outdoor space offers the potential for a cultural hub for the local and wider area, securing the benefits of cultural events and activities for future generations.
- plans to transform the waterfront in Porthcawl through the **Porthcawl Harbourside Placemaking Strategy**, developing new leisure and accommodation facilities and improving transport connectivity and active travel in the town. These plans are in their early stages and are not finalised or committed to, but they provide a clear strategic vision to transform Porthcawl by increasing capacity, improving connectivity, and strengthening the local businesses and services to complement the tourist activities along the coastline.
- construction has started on the restoration of the Cosy Corner site in Porthcawl through the EU-funded **Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus (PRIF)** programme, featuring community and retail space and complementing other regeneration projects such as the new marina, new sea defences and the recently restored Jennings Building.
- tourism proposals within adjoining local authority areas may also represent significant potential opportunities for Bridgend residents from an employment perspective, notably the recent planning permission granted by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council for an adventure resort in the Afan Valley.

BRIDGEND IN NUMBERS\*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Economic Impact	£345.80m	£350.42m	£362.69m	£146.33m	£225.14m
Total number of visitors	3.9m	3.7m	3.7m	1.4m	2.08m
Proportion which are day visitors	85%	84%	84%	86%	85%
Number of jobs in tourism	4,277	4,061	4,242	2,156	2,482



Around 16,000 bedspaces  
(10% serviced)



Average length of stay  
is under 4 days

The top visitor attractions in Bridgend County Borough\*\*



McArthur Glen  
Designer Outlet  
3.9 million visitors



Bryngarw  
Country Park  
242,549 visitors



Rest Bay  
115,087 visitors,  
based on car park data

Key events in Bridgend County Borough



Elvis Festival  
in Porthcawl  
35,000 visitors



Porthcawl  
10K Run  
12,000 visitors



Wartime  
Bridgend



## MARKET TRENDS



**Domestic travel:** domestic travel has become a major trend following the pandemic and has influenced people to look for hidden gems within close reach or search for a local 'staple' for ongoing visits.



**Leisure, lifestyle and wellbeing:** to compensate for the physical inactivity associated with remote working and modern lifestyle, more tourists seek out active leisure or ways to reconnect with nature, for example through camping and outdoor recreation. Activities such as cycling, hiking, water sports, and golf are notable in Bridgend County Borough and likely to grow. There has been a strong demand for higher quality of life, clean eating, and healthier living. Visitors would prefer to enjoy higher quality service or take part in more exclusive activities even if it means travelling in off-peak seasons.



**Eco travel:** there is a growing concern for the availability of ethical and environmentally conscious options. Rising consciousness of carbon footprint generation associated with transportation, visiting facilities under sustainable management, and purchasing food and products from environmentally conscious providers.



**Local, authentic experience:** an emerging trend is to stay in a destination like a local. There is a growing demand for blending in with local people in festivals, at social events, taking crafting/cooking lessons and exploring leisure activities. Food and dining preferences shift towards local food and drink.



**Technological advancements:** technological advancements help visitors get a streamlined and simpler service to purchase tourism product. Examples include contactless payments, social media and video platform marketing, the 'Internet of Things',





## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

In the preparation of the Destination Management Plan, there have been numerous conversations with stakeholders – between various departments of BCBC, with representatives from Town and Community Councils, accommodation providers, tourist attractions, activity providers and other local businesses that support the visitor economy. A range of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been identified below.

### STRENGTHS:

- Natural assets including award winning beaches, coastline, sand dunes, nature reserves and landscape characteristics of the three valleys.
- The strong association of different parts of the County Borough with golf and surfing, notably Porthcawl.
- The industrial heritage associated with the three valleys.
- Competitive prices for accommodation and amenities.
- Prominent visitor attractions such as the Trecco Bay Caravan Park and the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet.
- Growing interest in town centre food and drink offer, especially in Bridgend.
- Nationally recognised recreational routes for example sections of the Wales Coast Path and the Celtic Trail.
- Proximity to other locations such as Cardiff and Swansea for day visits.
- Easy access via car and train in particular.

### WEAKNESSES:

- High proportion of day visitors.
- Socio-economic profile – a lack of skillset, business, and commercial activities to foster a richer cultural experience and provide greater level of convenience.
- Lack of sustainable tourism activities to accommodate the growing number of responsible travellers.
- Lack of indoor exhibition facilities and attractions where the experience is not affected by poor weather.
- Lack of basic amenities such as street furniture, lighting, public toilets (including disabled toilets), bins and accessibility provision such as ramps/wheelchair access.
- Lack of online promotion of existing itineraries connecting local historic assets within the County Borough despite the availability of circular/heritage walks.
- Attractions are not well connected and are not collectively promoted under individual themes.
- The main town centres are not able to compete with other places as destinations in their own right – for example they lack diversity of food options / night time economy / retail experience.

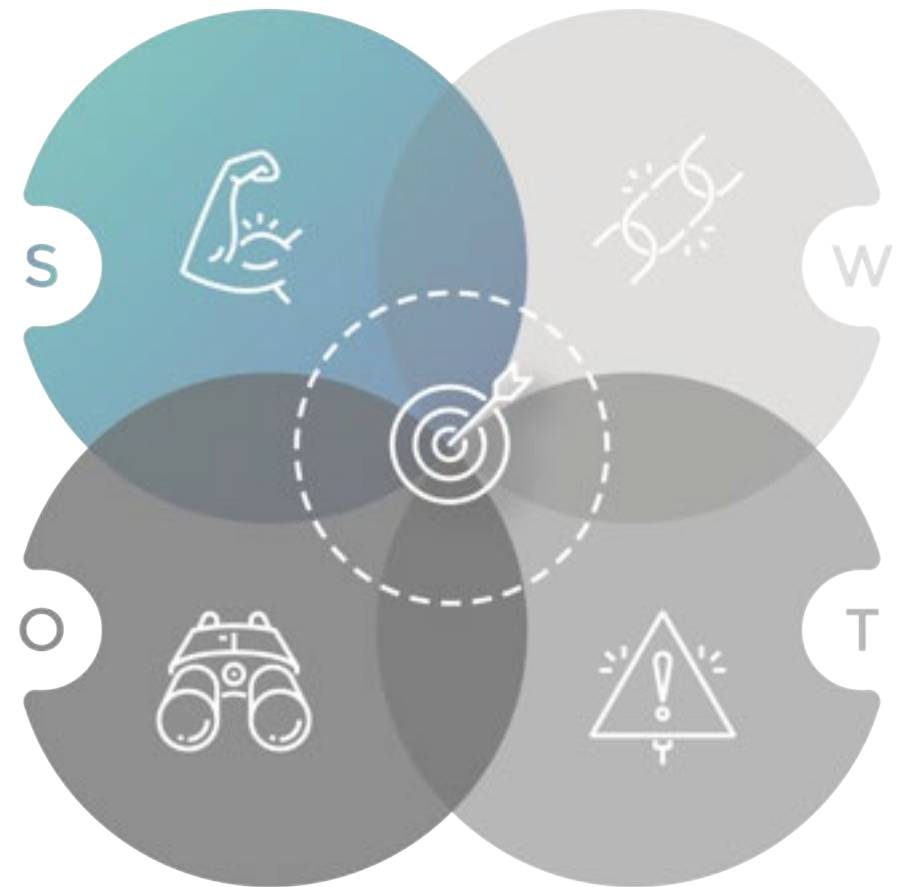


## OPPORTUNITIES:

- Enhanced digital communication, mainly supported by the Visit Bridgend website.
- Continued and increasing interest in leisure activities such as golf, watersports, hiking and cycling.
- Promotion of Bridgend County Borough as a major golf destination, featuring a group of outstanding golf courses supported by local accommodation services. Marketing of GEO-certified golf courses as a differentiator.
- Development of a diverse programme of annual events and festivals that stretch across the year.
- Development of heritage trails in and around the County, focusing on key towns and the three valleys.
- Further investment in, and development of, visitor attractions such as Hut 9. Further promotion is not viable until the capacity is greater.
- The regeneration of Bridgend and Porthcawl town centres through the Masterplan and Placemaking Strategy / Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus respectively.
- Opportunity to grow the night-time economy within town centres, and thereby increase footfall.
- Growing market for motorhome / campervan ownership and hire.
- Socially inclusive attractions and services that cater for people with specific requirements, such as access for people with a disability or illnesses or a pet-friendly environment.
- Improvements in public transport links and active travel routes, especially in and around Porthcawl.
- Installation of more electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and incorporation of measures to promote sustainable transport.
- Facilitating / removing barriers to Bridgend County Borough as a filming location for the media industry, followed by promotion as such.
- Opportunities to work more closely with neighbouring authorities, for example with NPTCBC in relation to employment opportunities presented by the proposed adventure resort at the head of the Afan Valley.
- Further opportunities to work more closely with regional entities, including Southern Wales, the Cardiff Capital Region and Valleys Regional Park to develop and promote tourism holistically.
- Opportunities to create a circular horse-riding route, linking with neighbouring local authorities.
- Encouraging more businesses to be involved in destination management and marketing activities, helping businesses to see what the value of growing / improving the visitor economy has to them.
- Expanding the accommodation offer within Bridgend County Borough to include additional hotel development and touring provision particularly in coastal areas.

## THREATS:

- Receding shoreline and potential loss of key coastal amenity features.
- Reduced scope for funding opportunities in local and regional infrastructure with loss of European funding
- Ongoing impacts affecting the visitor and wider economy arising as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit and current economic uncertainties including rises in the cost of living.
- Competition from other destinations, notably the Vale of Glamorgan and the Gower Peninsula as beach destinations, Neath Port Talbot as a recreational destination (mountain biking) and towns / villages with a more rounded offer (for example Cowbridge) or more developed accommodation offers (for example quality hotel development).
- High levels of car dependence, resulting in car parking issues, traffic congestion and pedestrian safety near major attractions.
- Pressures associated with over-tourism e.g. maintenance of walking / cycling routes and people's level of awareness about how to use the countryside.
- The loss of the local tourism association, introducing difficulties in stakeholder engagement.
- Signs, markings, and physical branding for attractions and amenities.
- The 'basics' can be missing – e.g. low levels of cleanliness for streets, public toilets and street furniture, limited lifeguard services, instances of poor visitor experience.
- Capacity of honeypot destinations such as Porthcawl in terms of visitor congestion.
- Potential reduction in camping and touring caravan facilities in the County Borough may impact visitor numbers and associated spend.





## OVERARCHING CONSIDERATIONS FOR BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH

### Geographic spread of opportunities and seasonal/daily visitor trends.

The DMP's overarching aim is to achieve viable economic growth which, in the context of destination management, can be defined as steady visitor spend throughout the course of a year, evenly spread across the County Borough. Even distribution of economic benefits maintains the wellbeing of residents through alleviating congestion at 'honey pot' sites such as Porthcawl, and revitalising less visited areas. This can be achieved through increasing off-peak visits and spend to flatten seasonal/weekly peaks and troughs.

### Visitor profile

Visitor profiling for the Valleys of South Wales and Glamorgan Heritage Coast and Countryside regions (Visit Wales regions in which areas of Bridgend County Borough are located) has identified that key markets include scenic explore couples, older cultural explorer couples, pre-family explorers and budget conscious families.

Their initial expectations from trips include a mix of 'rural coastline', a 'countryside or village' or a 'traditional coastal/seaside town'. The DMP seeks to accomplish higher visitor spend rather than simply higher visitor numbers. One of the ways to achieve this is to increase the proportion of visitors who stay overnight or a longer period in quality accommodation supported by commercial land uses.

### Opportunities for partnership working within the destination and regionally/nationally

The lack of an active tourism partnership has been identified as a weakness for Bridgend County Borough. Engaging with stakeholders, especially those directly or passively involved in tourism businesses is a must in co-ordinating a long-term programme to enhance the tourism offer in Bridgend.

Past experience has highlighted that local tourism business owners are highly enthusiastic about developing a comprehensive product and / or promoting Bridgend's tourism offer. This has been impacted by diminishing public sector resources and the absence of a strong framework to ensure regular discussions. Support for a clear framework to foster ongoing constructive discussions is required.

### Growing market share of Wales tourism spend

Visit Wales is focusing on raising the value of spend generated per visit rather than the volume of visitor numbers. According to 'Welcome to Wales 2022-2025', increases in the value of spend could be achieved across all aspects of industries interdependent on tourism through developing high-quality products and services to raise the overall profile of Wales as a destination and thus accommodating more staying visitors. Additionally, Visit Wales seeks to attract international visitors especially from America and Germany, potentially with interests in outdoor pursuits.

For Bridgend County Borough in particular, there has been a consistent demand for high quality consumer goods and services which could complement a prolonged or frequent use of its tourist attractions, most notably its award-winning golf-courses and beaches. Hotel accommodation, exclusive dining experiences, small group tours and outdoor activities have been identified as examples which may draw more staying visitors and make a positive impact on the value of spend.



## BRIDGEND'S PLAN ON A PAGE (Aligned with the approach taken by Visit Wales)



**VISION:** To shape a thriving visitor economy  
which celebrates the unique identity  
of Bridgend County Borough



### BRIDGEND'S CORE OFFER:

- Outstanding beaches, coastline and natural areas
- Industrial heritage and landscape
- Traditional seaside resort
- Designer retail experience
- Outdoor recreation – golf, watersports, walking and cycling

### APPROACH:



Growing the market share of Wales  
tourism spend



Showcasing excellence



Distributing benefits more evenly – both  
geographically and throughout the year

### GOALS:

aligned to those of Visit Wales

- Economic growth that delivers benefits to people and places
- Environmental sustainability
- Social and cultural enrichment
- Listen to residents, visitors and businesses

### BRAND OBJECTIVES:

aligned to those of Visit Wales

- Elevate our status
- Surprise and inspire
- Change perceptions
- Be unmistakably Bridgend



### TYPES OF VISITORS:

- Day visitors
- Staying visitors
- Special interest:  
heritage / recreation
- Trade and operators



### OUR VISITORS:

**Profile:** Increase staying visits

**Seasonality:** Year round  
recreation pursuits

**Spend:** Increased visitor spend due  
to longer visits

**Spread:** A 2-3 hour catchment &  
Day visits from within Wales

### KEY PRIORITIES FOR BRIDGEND:



Great products and places



Quality visitor experience



Profile Raising



Embedding sustainable tourism

### COMMERCIAL PRIORITIES:

- Focus on accommodation
- Improving the basics
- Commercial partnerships



### IMPLEMENTATION:

Refreshed partnership approach

Collaborate with existing forums and structures

Encourage business and community



## OUR VISION

The vision for destination management for Bridgend County Borough Council over the next five years is to:

“ **Shape a thriving visitor economy  
which celebrates the unique identity  
of Bridgend County** ”

This vision is supported by goals aligned with those of Visit Wales, namely to:

1. Create economic growth that delivers benefits to people and places
2. Promote environmental sustainability
3. Provide social and cultural enrichment for residents and visitors alike
4. Incorporate health benefits (for example through promoting active travel, physical activity or mental wellbeing associated with experiencing the natural environment).

The following sections set out further the rationale behind each of these priorities, and identify relevant actions to be taken during the Destination Management Plan period.

## OUR PRIORITIES

To bring this vision into reality, the Destination Management Plan will focus on the following priorities:



### Great Products and Places

Increase range of quality accommodation  
Develop year round bookable product  
Promote placemaking  
Develop core events programme



### Quality Visitor Experience

Focus on 'Brilliant Basics'  
Skills training  
Emphasis on local food and drink  
Authentic experiences



### Profile Raising

Increase visibility of Visit Bridgend  
Strong messaging in key attractions  
Distinctive brand  
Bridgend as a set location for TV/film



### Embedding Sustainable Tourism

Promoting active travel  
Supporting sustainable business practices  
Trailblazer for high environmental standards



## GREAT PRODUCTS AND PLACES

Bridgend has much to celebrate in terms of its tourism product, including its coastline, natural environment, interesting heritage, significant visitor attractions and range of outdoor sports, pursuits and activities. However, there is scope for expansion, improvement and gap-filling. For example in relation to visitor accommodation, where there is currently an over-emphasis on budget accommodation and opportunities to bring in quality serviced accommodation as well as support further growth in camping and glamping outlets.

Major proposals are in development or have been launched to promote place-making within the County Borough's main towns of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg. Integrating destination management into these interventions will be critical. Whilst maintaining an events programme is currently challenging, the benefits of generating additional visitor demand out of season are recognised.

Finally, emphasis on bookable product provides an opportunity to spread economic benefit and business opportunities more widely across the County Borough as well as to create greater certainty for tourism businesses during the post-pandemic recovery (please see table overleaf).



### PILLAR 1: CONNECTIVITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE



### PILLAR 2: BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE SUPPORT



### PILLAR 3: PUBLIC SECTOR AND FOUNDATIONAL ECONOMY



### PILLAR 4: LOW CARBON ECONOMY



**TABLE 1. Great Products and Places Action Plan**

Action	Key Partner/s	Timescale	Link to BCBC Economic Strategy
Regularly review and monitor the accommodation stock across Bridgend County Borough and engage in active discussions with those seeking to expand or establish new tourist accommodation developments for better outcomes.	BCBC / Private sector	Annual review	Pillar 3
Encourage the creation of visitor accommodation options that broadly support the entirety of Bridgend County and surrounding regions to maximise the impact of the visitor economy.	BCBC / Private Sector / Neighbouring Authorities	By Yr 5	Pillar 1 Pillar 3
Undertake a comprehensive, map-based audit of tourism product within the County Borough.	BCBC	Yr 1	Pillar 1
Liaise closely with BCBC Planning Department in relation to proposals for change of use / loss of existing visitor accommodation.	BCBC	Ongoing	Pillar 1 Pillar 3
Support businesses with relevant intelligence and funding opportunities to enable investment and expansion where appropriate, particularly those that would encourage staying visitors (for example glamping facilities or self-catering accommodation).	BCBC / Visit Wales	Ongoing	Pillar 1 Pillar 3
Monitor bedstock and occupancy rates on an annual basis.	BCBC	Annual review	Pillar 1
Attract new events and develop existing events with a long term aim to group and promote events by theme and season to optimise referral, repeat visits and resources. Facilitate development of events through collaboration between event organisers and BCBC to capture opportunities off-peak seasons.	BCBC / Event organisers	Ongoing	Pillar 1



Action	Key Partner/s	Timescale	Link to BCBC Economic Strategy
Maintain close involvement with BCBC departments in relation to the progress of the Bridgend Masterplan and Porthcawl regeneration opportunities.	BCBC	Ongoing	Pillar 1 Pillar 3 Pillar 4
Work with partners and the community to strengthen and promote the offer of Maesteg Town Hall as a cultural hub and driver for tourism in the Valleys.	BCBC / AWEN Cultural Trust	Yrs 2 to 5	Pillar 3
Support existing attractions in the Valleys (e.g. Parc Calon Lân and associated Mountain Bike Trail, Bryngarw Country Park and Parc Slip) by facilitating their marketing, increasing the capacity to support visitors and improve the awareness of these attractions in the County Borough through reciprocal support.	BCBC / Tourism operators	Ongoing	Pillar 1 Pillar 3
Partnership working to identify and promote new opportunities, particularly in relation to existing strengths of the County Borough (for example potential mountain bike facilities, Valleys Regional Park cycle route, Rest Bay opportunities, opportunities within nature reserves such as Kenfig and Merthyr Mawr).	All key partners	Ongoing	Pillar 1
Support the development of heritage tourism attractions and experiences within the County Borough. Potential examples include the creation of a heritage trail in Bridgend; heritage experience trails throughout the County Borough; support for attractions such as Hut 9, Porthcawl Museum, St John's House, Maesteg Town Hall; and events that celebrate notable characters such as Richard Pryce.	BCBC / Bridgend Town Council / Private sector	Yr 1 and 2	Pillar 1 Pillar 3
Support the promotion of local food and drink in restaurants, shops and visitor attractions.	BCBC	Ongoing	Pillar 1





## QUALITY VISITOR EXPERIENCE

A positive visitor experience is all too often undermined by lack of attention to the detail – the presence of litterbins, the presence and condition of public toilets, good waymarking, food standards and so on. Ensuring we get these aspects right (termed by Visit Wales as ‘brilliant basics’) can have a knock-on effect in terms of dwell-time, repeat visits, promotion and reputation.

Quality visitor experience can also be impacted by the welcome people receive, or by the way a particular attraction or visitor accommodation is managed – the skillset of the hospitality workforce needs to adequately reflect their role as wider ambassadors for Bridgend.

Visit Wales target market segments include ‘independent explorers’ who value authentic experiences and places, something which the more undiscovered areas of Bridgend can offer. Through this priority we aim to ensure that all visitors have a positive and memorable experience throughout all aspects of their stay.

**TABLE 2. Quality Visitor Experience Action Plan**

Action	Key Partner/s	Timescale	Link to BCBC Economic Strategy
Work with businesses and partners to identify tourism infrastructure improvements across all of the County Borough to ensure that all visitors have a positive and memorable experience throughout all aspects of their stay.	BCBC / Visit Wales / Tourist attractions and operators	Yr 2 onwards	Pillar 1
Work with partner organisations to develop and promote authentic experiences for visitors and as part of community wellbeing.	BCBC / AWEN Cultural Trust	Yr 1 onwards	Pillar 2 Pillar 3
Identify areas of skills demand within the County Borough and work with partners to develop, raise awareness for, and implement training opportunities which meet the needs of the industry.	BCBC / training providers / tourist attractions and operators	Ongoing	Pillar 2
Review opportunities to incorporate accessible play equipment and facilities at appropriate visitor locations (following the success of that introduced at Bryngarw Country Park).	BCBC / tourist attractions and operators	Ongoing	Pillar 1
Review lifeguarding patterns and opportunities, in line with competitor destinations.	BCBC / activity operators / RNLI	Yr 1	Pillar 1
Continue to lobby for improved public transport (notably bus services), encourage the extension of public transport services into the evening to develop the night-time economy, and encourage activity operators to promote service information.	BCBC / Bus operators / Private sector	Ongoing	Pillar 1
Improvements to visitor information, including adequate waymarking for facilities such as toilets, cafes, bike and Stand-Up Paddleboard hire facilities, visitor interpretation.	BCBC / Partner organisations e.g. private sector, Cadw	Ongoing	Pillar 1 Pillar 3
Identify opportunities to develop cultural activities across Bridgend County Borough, including enhancing walking trails with art, outdoor theatre, music events, signposting/information boards for cultural/historical assets of interest, pop-up activities.	BCBC / AWEN Cultural Trust	Yr 1 onwards	Pillar 1

## PROFILE RAISING

Although Bridgend County Borough sees a significant economic impact from tourism, it is not automatically perceived as a visitor destination beyond the traditional seaside resort of Porthcawl. Profile raising therefore has an essential role to play in terms of moving perceptions of Bridgend forward and showcasing the range of quality experiences and assets the County Borough has to offer.

Contrary to previous Destination Management Plans, the focus has moved away from attracting more visitors to the County Borough, to attracting a different type of visitor – one that is willing to stay for longer and therefore spend more money in the local economy.

Activities to help achieve this include developing a distinctive brand, and working with partners to develop strong messaging campaigns at busy locations (for example the McArthurGlen Design Outlet attracts millions of visitors each year, many of whom travel a considerable distance). The distinctive landscapes of the County Borough make it sought after as a set location for the television and film industry; actively encouraging and facilitating this type of activity could lead to a rapid boost in visitor potential.





**TABLE 3. Profile Raising Action Plan**

Action	Key Partner/s	Timescale	Link to BCBC Economic Strategy
Work with partners to undertake a programme of familiarisation tours with travel trade businesses and tour operators.	BCBC / Southern Wales Tourism	Annually	Pillar 2 Pillar 3
Identify resources to co-ordinate tourism PR activity and align with opportunities.	BCBC	Ongoing	Pillar 3
Use market research and visitor feedback to identify specific campaigns targeting market segments and growth areas.	BCBC / Visit Wales	Annually	Pillar 3
Work with neighbouring authorities and regional partners to progress opportunities of potential benefit to the wider destination.	Valleys Regional Park / Neighbouring Local Authorities	Yr 1 onwards	Pillar 1 Pillar 3
Expand the Visit Bridgend website to promote a wider range of assets and attractions across the destination, particularly focusing on thematic experiences.	BCBC	Ongoing	Pillar 1 Pillar 3
Identify single point of contact within BCBC to be responsible for promoting the local authority to the television and film industry, for co-ordinating permissions and overcoming challenges.	BCBC	Yr 1	Pillar 2 Pillar 3
Develop a shared narrative about different aspects of Bridgend (for example about industrial heritage or about Porthcawl as a destination) which can sit under a single brand and be bought into by the whole tourism sector.	BCBC	Yr 1	Pillar 3
Support organisations to work together and collaborate with regional/national organisations to promote Bridgend as a tourist destination.	BCBC / tourist attractions and operators / other partners	Ongoing	Pillar 2 Pillar 3



## EMBEDDING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Evidence suggests that sustainable tourism in Bridgend County Borough is not as advanced as it could, or should, be and that there is still much to be done to ensure that sustainability and environmental awareness are embedded into every aspect of visitor experience.

Some of Bridgend's strongest selling points are its wide range of natural and outdoor attractions within environmentally sensitive locations; yet climate change is a very real and current threat to many of these assets, as is visitor pressure.

The generation of carbon footprint, excess waste and noise pollution from visitor activities are negative effects that interfere with the viability and well-being of local communities. There are also signs of change – for example the trailblazing role of Bridgend's golf courses in becoming GEO-certified, sustainable golf locations.

**TABLE 4. Embedding Sustainable Tourism Action Plan**

Action	Key Partner/s	Timescale	Link to BCBC Economic Strategy
Commission a sustainable travel for tourism study for Porthcawl to review options to alleviate congestion and visitor pressure.	BCBC	Yr 1	Pillar 1 Pillar 4
Promote active travel opportunities in and around the County Borough through good waymarking and effective promotion of trails and routes. Examples include promotion of the Sustainable Bridgend County Coast Path between Trecco Bay and Porthcawl town centre (on completion in 2023).	BCBC / tourist operators	Yr 2 onwards	Pillar 1 Pillar 4
Promote sustainable golf tourism within the County Borough and incentivise the GEO-certification process with non-accredited golf courses.	BCBC / golf businesses	Ongoing	Pillar 4
Prioritise tourism products that deliver a sustainable offer, such as circular economy or ethical produce.	BCBC / Visit Wales	Ongoing	Pillar 4
Work collaboratively to encourage the installation of electric vehicle charging points at visitor destinations and attractions.	BCBC / Visit Wales / private sector	Ongoing	Pillar 1 Pillar 4
Celebrate sustainable tourism excellence through a local award scheme.	BCBC	Annually	Pillar 4
Use the natural capital of the County Borough to encourage increased visitor activity and healthy interaction with nature.	BCBC / tourist attractions and operators	Ongoing	Pillar 4



## IMPLEMENTATION

Active partnership working is critical to ensuring the implementation of actions within this Destination Management Plan and the successful promotion of Bridgend County Borough as a coherent destination. There has been much consideration as to the best approach such partnership working might take and whether this should involve the creation of a new forum, the extension of an existing one, or simply collaboration between various forums and organisations. Approaches of neighbouring local authorities and those from further afield have been reviewed to determine what works well and where lessons can be learnt.

### The main components of a refreshed partnership approach for Bridgend County Borough are considered to be:

- Encouraging business and community involvement – ensuring that people can see how growth in the visitor economy may benefit them and the role they have to play. Re-building an industry network could begin through holding regular events, each based on a clearly defined ‘real-world’ issue.
- Collaboration with existing forums and structures with roles to play in destination management and marketing, for example the Bridgend Business Forum, the Coastal Partnership and the Valleys Regional Park.
- That communication needs to be two-way, to enable the sharing of ideas, with open discussion on matters of interest and concern.

## MONITORING

A series of performance measures have been identified by which the progress of the Destination Management Plan in terms of its four priority areas can be monitored. The last few years have shown how rapidly things can change and the importance of being flexible and agile to respond to changing circumstances. Regular monitoring and review will ensure that challenges can be responded to as they arise. The following performance measures are proposed.

Performance measure	Method
Number of staying visitors increases	Annual STEAM data
Economic impact of tourism returns to 2019 levels	Annual STEAM data
Increase in serviced accommodation bedstock	Bedstock survey
Improved visitor satisfaction	Visit Wales survey / local survey
Perceptions and awareness of Bridgend as a place to visit improve	Revisit perception research at end of DMP period Engagement with trade operators



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