

# BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** SOUTHAMPTON'S DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021-2031  
**DATE:** 15 JULY 2021  
**RECIPIENT:** OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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## THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

### SUMMARY:

In Autumn 2020, TEAM Tourism (TT) was commissioned to:

- Deliver a 10-year Destination Management Plan (DMP) for Southampton, with clear objectives and actions to drive and direct the regeneration of the city's visitor economy
- Identify options and set up costs for a context appropriate Destination Management Organisation (DMO) model to support sustainable delivery.

The approach required TT to be cognisant and reflective of:

- Southampton's circumstances, resources and relationships
- Strategic plans including Solent LEP's 2050 Economic Vision, the Council's Economic and Green Growth Strategy 2020-2030, UK City of Culture 2025 bid, the Local Plan etc
- The impact of Covid-19 on the city, sector and supply chain
- Finding realistic and pragmatic solutions whilst being ambitious and stretching.

The process involved consultation with internal and external stakeholders and workshops with a smaller steering group to test approaches, share findings and respond to interim and draft reports.

The draft Destination Management Plan, proposals for implementation and resourcing will be considered in full by Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

### BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

#### Introduction

1. Over the past 10 years tourism has been one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK – forecast prior to the pandemic to be worth £257bn by 2025. In 2019, tourism generated an estimated £422m of direct expenditure to Southampton's economy, supporting 7,720 FTEs including direct and indirect jobs.
2. Regionally other destinations have invested in the sector and Solent LEP's 2050 vision identifies the cultural and visitor economy as one of its six priority areas. This dovetails with the Council's new Economic and Green Growth Strategy 2020-2030, international city agenda and the UK City of Culture 2025 bid as drivers to develop the visitor economy.
3. Southampton has never had a DMP, nor a DMO. The former is a business plan for building and managing the visitor economy in a destination; it is shared with stakeholders and used as a guide to manage and invest in the destination. The latter is how the destination is managed and developed by the partnership.

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4. Since 2018 the Council has;
  - As lead partner secured funding from Visit England's Discover England Fund (DEF) to deliver the 'Leisure excursions in Southern England for Cruise and Conference' project. It resulted in new itineraries and resources for Southampton, Hampshire and Plymouth.
  - In 2019, the Council partnered with GO! Southampton to develop the new VisitSouthampton website, with a three-year funding partnership agreement.
  - Tourism was added into the responsibilities of the Head of Culture as part of the 2019 leadership resourcing review in recognition of the need to further the Council's leadership in this strategic area. With the development and delivery of this plan being a key next step in this critical area.

5. In 2020 the work to develop a Destination Management Plan and options on how to deliver was commissioned by the Head of Culture and Tourism, involving partners in brief development and the tendering process. The aim of this process is to support the ambition to enhance our visitor economy and align with our ambitions to be the UK City of Culture in 2025.

## **Destination Management Plan**

6. TEAM Tourism have produced a draft DMP including proposals for delivery which will be reviewed as part of the full report going to Cabinet on 19 July. The strategic aims are to:
  - Recognise the economic and social value of tourism, and develop this sector sustainably
  - Enhance Southampton's reputation and image as a thriving city and destination.
7. The DMP also outlines the market, products, challenges and opportunities, with a strategy that focuses on a prioritised and incremental action plan for the City in the years 2021-2030:
  - Phase 1: Recovery and Foundations (2021-2024)
  - Phase 2: Development and Stability (2024-2027)
  - Phase 3: Sustainable Regeneration (2027-2030)

## **The Destination Management Organisation - options**

8. Delivery of the plan inevitably requires infrastructure and resources. The commission reviewed existing arrangements and undertook a gap analysis to devise possible options reflecting the infrastructure, financial and Covid-recovery challenges and opportunities in the city.
9. An assessment of the advantages, disadvantages, governance, staff and resource implications of five possible DMO options, identified below, is included in the full report that will be considered by Cabinet on 19 July 2021. The recommendation to Cabinet is to implement a 'Virtual Destination Management organisation' in the first instance.
  - Standalone Independent DMO
  - Management with existing 3<sup>rd</sup> Party DMO
  - SCC Direct Delivery
  - The 'Virtual DMO'
  - Local Host Organisation

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## RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

10. The Council has taken a lead in commissioning the work with partners to develop a Destination Management Plan and the Council will continue to be crucial in destination management however it is led and managed, given the responsibilities and interdependencies around how the city is regenerated, looks, feels and is activated and animated for visitors and residents.
11. The delivery of the DMP will benefit from existing schemes and pipeline projects already in train across the Council including transport, place shaping, parks and heritage assets and will dovetail with work being undertaken to deliver our economic recovery, local plan, environmental and carbon neutral ambitions as well as leisure, cultural activities and city wide communications.
12. There is also the significant opportunity to align existing resources to develop shared campaigns and align skills development and training opportunities with activities undertaken by others e.g. GO! Southampton's Welcome Host training.
13. Resource options for the delivery of the destination management plan are included in the full report that will go to Cabinet on 19 July for consideration and determination, with a recommendation that the Council resources the support for a Virtual Destination Management Organisation through resource already allocation to the Tourism agenda within the Cultural Services and Tourism division, and new additional resource in the form of an additional post and a small amount of annual revenue 'seed funding'.
14. This will enable the partnership to be set up, and for a delivery, engagement and marketing plan to be delivered, whilst focussing on the medium and longer term aim of bringing in further investment into the partnership.

## RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

15. Risks	Mitigation
Limited stakeholder buy-in and/or goodwill is withdrawn at various points along the journey	Shared purpose and ambition Good governance Relationship management Communication Partnership work & investment
Key partners no longer part of the city ecology	Provide Business support/advice if required Identify different delivery partners
Insufficient resource to deliver plan impacts on the regeneration of the visitor economy	Partnership commitment and resource to support delivery
Insufficient resource impacts on preparedness for UK City of Culture	As above

## Appendices/Supporting Information:

1. Draft Southampton Destination Management Plan 2021-2031

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