

Portland Tourism and Visitor Management Strategy

Working Draft March 2013

2013 to ****

A Visitor Management Strategy plays an essential role in protecting the ecological sustainability of protected areas, providing funding and business opportunities, and enabling visitors to obtain worthwhile experiences from their visit.

The policy and strategy are intended to assist the Portland Community Partnership, together with the Town, Borough and County Councils together with other relevant stakeholders to better manage the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism and minimise adverse visitor impacts.

Strategic Theme 1 – Visitor Brand & Product Awareness

Brand Awareness is the extent to which a brand is recognised by potential customers, and is correctly associated with a particular product, or in this case Portland as a destination of choice. Brand awareness plays a major role in a consumer's destination decisions; a high recognition of Portland through constant advertisements and associations coaxes the person to make a decision in favour of a Portland visit.

The Portland Brand needs to be defined and marketed in consistent way, building associations of Portland with national class outdoor activities, heritage and culture. Portland can therefore be promoted as a clean nature-based brand. These associations lend themselves to spring and autumn visits, complementing the summer attractions of Weymouth. The importance of reducing seasonality is an important objective and some actions relate specifically to raising awareness and visits away from the main season.

Objective	Actions	Timeframe	Key Milestone	Lead
<i>Confirm and agree the brand identity which reflects the Island's 'Offer'</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an assessment of current brands being used by stakeholders Engage with stakeholders to agree overall brand for the Island. Introduce low cost interim measures if appropriate. Promote existing resources whilst strategy is being progressed e.g Visitor Map, Walking and Cycling Map 			
<i>Spread the use of the Portland brand identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a stakeholders 'marketing kit' that includes logo, banners, type, font, colour scheme and overall design of the brand Publish, promote and deliver brand kit to stakeholders Raise local residents' awareness of brand product. 			
<i>Exploit opportunities for supporting the brand through national and local designations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen tourism performance across the whole of Portland by maximising marketing links with Weymouth and West Dorset 			

Objective	Actions	Timeframe	Key Milestone	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure strong presence of the Portland in marketing of Dorset wider areas and generic products • Develop and deliver a promotional campaign linked to the Island's brand • Establish and promote low season offers linked to niche markets the Island can compete for e.g national/world class outdoor activities 			
<p><i>Develop the Portland product (offer) to increase awareness of the Island and generate an increase in visitors</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain the annual events programme and establish an Outdoor Festival that aims to attract new visitors to the Island, generates new publicity and stakeholder engagement • Aim to establish future cultural events on the Island linked to the potential legacy opportunities from hosting the London 2012 Olympics • Maintain an effective network of visitor information centres across the Island and that are linked with other centres in Dorset and the sub region by providing effective orientation material • Establish a strategically based Island Tourist and Information Centre presence which can appeal to both inbound and outbound traffic – with associated parking availability. • Run pilots joint venue ticketing and visitor conservation contribution schemes • Increase local awareness and understanding of tourism issues and its contribution to communities, improved services and jobs. • Ensure that tourism related events, locations and venues are also accessible to the local community • Develop an 'Engagement Programme' with key stakeholders to maintain dialogue between tourism enterprises, landowners, communities, investors and planners • Through working with stakeholders, land owners the local authority and other partners encourage appropriate new and existing tourism uses in existing and former quarries. Build on existing 			

Objective	Actions	Timeframe	Key Milestone	Lead
	<p>strategies e.g Portland Quarries Nature Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the development of opportunities for investment in well sited new accommodation to meet a range of markets focused on Portland's attributes 			

Strategic Theme 2 – Consistent Service Quality

In the highly competitive tourism industry, the quality of the visitor experience is the key to success. It's what sets Portland apart and it provides a rewarding experience that will last in the minds of our visitors long after they leave.

Experiences are a combination of place, infrastructure, services and interpretation. Together they can deliver a true visitor experience when they match the needs of the visitor and reflect the quality service tourism brand. The whole experience - place, infrastructure, services and interpretation - is greater than the sum of its parts. To maximise the experience then, it's necessary to maximise all these layers.

A quality visitor experience is what visitors are increasingly wanting - and they're willing to pay for it. It's not enough to have great natural areas, visitors are more interested in the experiences that are overlaid on it. Island Rangers, bus drivers, receptionists, waiters and housekeepers are all central to the quality of the visitor experience. Every interaction is an opportunity to add value – to help create memories and impressions that last long after the visitors have gone home.

We have an opportunity to make Portland a service excellence experience for our visitors. Through training, mentoring and a buy-in of everyone involved in making a Portland Visitor Experience a truly memorable one we can make Portland a destination of choice. During the quiet winter quarter service quality training can be provided on the Island. Through making Portland a 'Living Wage' economy we can all benefit from increased visitor spend.

Objective	Actions	Timeframe	Key Milestone	Lead
<i>Improve the quality of the Offer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a Tourism Quality Pledge to stakeholders Foster participation in quality assurance schemes for accommodation, attractions, retail and boats Promote and expand a Quality Charter 			
<i>Develop a quality 'welcome' to customers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with enterprises to improve local knowledge, visitor welcome and customer service. Consider use of existing resources e.g Jurassic Coast Encourage upgrading and investment in the hire fleet and land-based accommodation and services Ensure access to relevant skills training and service quality enhancement for existing and future staff and appropriate support for new business ventures. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and widen role of schemes such as the Volunteer Rangers and Youth Volunteer Rangers which encourages entry level awareness and training. 			
<i>Establish an equality scheme recognising the requirements of visitors and residents with special needs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an equality assessment scheme to encourage stakeholders to improve services and facilities for visitors and residents with special needs or who are hard to reach 			

Strategic Theme 3 – Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is defined by The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) as:

‘Leading to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems’.

Rather than a type of product, sustainable tourism is an ethos that underpins all tourism activities and is integral to all aspects of tourism development and management and not just an add-on. Tourism will be managed on Portland in a way that will:

- Protect the coastal and marine environment including its unique natural and heritage assets
- Support visitor safety and enjoyment whilst ensuring a balance between the needs of tourists and the preservation of existing and evolving community values.
- Minimise adverse visitor impacts on the social, economic and physical environment
- Add economic, social and environmental benefits to the community

There will also be economic, environmental and social benefits :

- Economic through a reduction in energy use, water use or waste production will both reduce costs and gain market leverage by reducing their impact on the planet.
- Environmental reinforces Portland’s nature-based brand and natural visitor experiences.
- Social through local jobs for local people with a visitor experience enriched (or diminished) by engagement with the local community.

Objective	Actions	Timeframe	Key Milestone	Lead
<i>Embed sustainable principles and priorities in the development of tourism and other business development on the Island</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect landscapes, amenity and biodiversity from intrusive development by working with the local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnership, Local Nature Partnership ,the community, voluntary sector and land owners Monitor and maintain appropriate zoning and management for different forms of access and recreation Ensure all visitors have access to appropriate information on responsible access and activities Strengthen engagement of everyone in sustainability management Establish an initiative for visitor support for conservation 			

<p><i>Promote environmental and sustainability messages to visitors and residents</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide visitors with a wide range of opportunities to experience, enjoy and understand the special natural environment and heritage of the Portland • Develop an integrated interpretation strategy which allows for optimum and layered use of resources. • Review and update the range of information and interpretation material and media, including new mobile IT options. • Further develop and promote opportunities for walking and cycling as well as other outdoor activities. • Support the restoration, interpretation, linking and promotion of a range of heritage themes and sites • Support education , infrastructure investment and enforcement measures to manage impacts and use localism opportunities to support any required policy changes. 			

Implementation and Monitoring

Structures for coordination and action

There needs to be a single body that leads Portland’s tourism industry to jointly deliver marketing and development programs that drive benefits from domestic and international tourism. It would take overall responsibility for seeing that the strategy is implemented and for coordinating action. This is particularly important as it is a complex area, cutting across many administrative boundaries.

To effectively fulfil this role, the single body will support Portland’s tourism agency by:

- Creating a new knowledge and understanding for industry and stakeholders through tourism research, analysis and insights
- Identify the barriers to Portland tourism and taking effective, consistent action with those who can make a difference
- Establish, articulate and maintain the Portland tourism brand and brand values through supporting creative and innovative marketing
- Achieve alignment of Portland’s tourism product, experiences and infrastructure to match market expectations of the clean nature-based brand.

The value of having a partnership body to fulfil this role in destinations is increasingly recognised in the UK. This should bring together all the main public and private stakeholder interests in tourism in the area. The European Charter also requires that there should be a 'permanent forum or equivalent arrangement established between the protected area authority, local municipalities, conservation and community organisations and representatives of the tourism industry'.

Any coordinating body should be independent, has a membership embracing the public and private sectors and many interests, and works in a focused manner.

To establish this strategy a programme of consultation and engagement needs to be undertaken with key stakeholders by the end of 2012. The PCP should endorse the draft strategy and proposed engagement programme as a way forward for the partnership and its partners for the economic and social benefit of the Island, its communities and visitors.

Strategy Engagement and Endorsement Programme

Programme	Date	Lead
PCP review proposed strategy		
Appraise PCP feedback and amend strategy as appropriate		
Consult on draft strategy with stakeholders		
Appraise stakeholder feedback and amend strategy as appropriate		
PCP & stakeholder endorse strategy		
Implement strategy		