

Thanet
District
Council
**Tourism Scrutiny
Review 16 April
2024**



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Executive Summary and Recommendations

Thanet is a coastal District with a population of about 140,600 and is served by Thanet District Council and ten Parish and Town Councils that include Acol, Birchington, Cliffsend, Manston, Minster, Monkton, St Nicholas-at-Wade with Sarre Parish Councils, Broadstairs, Ramsgate, Westgate-on-Sea Town Councils and the Margate Charter Trustees. Parish and Town Councils, being second tier level Local Authorities after the District Council, provide a number of services that they fund through precepts. Tourism to the district's coastline is one of the key economic activities that benefits the local economy to grow. A review of the impact of tourism helps the Council to create an enabling environment for this growth. A digest of recommendations is set out below and the detailed conclusions included in the full report.

Digest of Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Beach management

Improve beach management in peak season through measures (some already being trialled here), including:

- Clearer signage on all beaches, with zoning for faster response to incidents
- CCTV Command Centres on all beaches to monitor safety & tackle ASB
- Multi-agency patrols on beaches and hotspot areas to pre-empt trouble
- Upskilling of TDC Enforcement Officers to enable them to issue Fixed Penalty Notices
- Promoting the Beach Check app to visitors to share information & help spread visitor numbers
- Ensure signage re permitted areas for jet skis and how to report infringements is clearly visible on all Thanet's beaches.

Recommendation 2: Public toilets

Improve the provision of public toilets, particularly those most used by visitors, by:

- Accelerating the planned public toilet refurbishment programme and ensuring regular maintenance of all public toilets
- Considering ways to extend opening hours of beachside toilets during peak season
- Investigating possibilities of collaborating with hospitality businesses to offer toilet facilities to visitors when public toilets are closed
- Setting up & managing additional temporary toilet facilities along beaches and at popular venues during peak season and for special events.

Recommendation 3: Waste management

Work to maintain cleanliness, manage waste effectively, improve recycling rates and minimise costs of managing additional waste at peak periods by:

- Ensuring all beaches and visitor attractions are well supplied with ordinary waste bins and clearly labelled recycling bins, and that these are emptied frequently
- Ensuring locations of bins are clearly flagged and visible from a distance (eg by use of more large, highly coloured 'The bin is here →' banners on beaches, in parks etc)
- Providing 2-minute litter pick stations on all main beaches
- Providing toy recycling at all Thanet's main beaches over the summer season
- Ensuring penalties for littering and Thanet's PSPO rules are clearly displayed at all beaches, parks and visitor attractions, and ensuring our Enforcement Officers can levy fines where necessary
- Seeking to ensure all short-term lets have appropriate recycling & waste management information & facilities in place.

Recommendation 4: Traffic management

Proactively manage traffic and parking issues during peak season by measures such as:

- Identifying problem spots and considering what traffic control measures may be appropriate to address the issues - e.g. creating low traffic areas, additional temporary car parks, park & ride minibus schemes
- seeking external funding for measures such as 'before' park & ride minibus schemes' as these would clearly represent a big drain on resources
- Ensuring car parks are regularly patrolled to reduce ASB
- As part of the parking review, consider measures to simplify parking for residents and visitors (e.g. resident and seasonal parking passes) and to make best use of underused parking facilities (e.g. introducing overnight stay facilities for campervans, along the lines of 'aires' in mainland Europe).

Recommendation 5: Maximising income from the visitor economy

Actively investigate opportunities to maximise income to the Council from the visitor economy to help balance its costs to the Council - for example:

- Levying additional Council tax on second homes
- When permitted, levying a modest tourism tax on overnight stays
- Ensuring holiday lets contribute to funding the costs they impose (via Council tax or business rates)
- Ensuring we recoup our costs on large, professionally run events that bring in visitors, while minimising the charges we levy on small-scale, locally- run events and activities
- Exploring opportunities to provide paid-for facilities (eg overnight campervan parking and more beach huts including some with overnight facilities).

Foreword



I wish to thank my fellow Councillors who were members of the Tourism Working Party, senior officers and councillors who attended the various sessions where the working party was taking evidence that was then used to come up with this report.

It's been a really interesting exercise for us as Councillors to get an insight into what staff and councillors think about how we can mitigate the negative impact of tourism in our District. A number of ideas have been identified in this report, many of which were proposed by all parties, which if implemented will successfully lead to a more effective approach for tourism activities in the District. I would also like to thank Thanet District Council officers for their input to support this review project and officers from Democratic Services for their help in putting this report together.

With the ever tightening of the budgets year on year we feel that if the recommendations can be implemented this will hopefully make a big difference to how services are delivered for our local communities.

Once the report is presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Members will forward the report and its various recommendations to Cabinet for action in due course.

Cllr Leo Britcher
Chairman Tourism Review Working Party

Members of the Tourism Review Working Party



Councillor Leo Britcher (Chair)



Cllr Trish Austin



Cllr David Green



Cllr George Kup



Cllr Jack Packman

Introduction

As part of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's scrutiny review topics, the Panel agreed to carry out a review of the impact of tourism in the district. Whilst the Panel acknowledged the significantly positive impact of tourism in Thanet, the review was tasked with focusing on the negative impact. This is in order to identify mitigating measures that are required, to better manage the impact of tourism in the district and maximise the benefits it brings to Thanet. A working party comprising five Councillors from the Panel membership was established on 20 July 2023 to investigate and report on this and make recommendations for consideration by the Panel and if appropriate subsequently for Cabinet for consideration and action.

Working Party Expectations

The Working Party hopes that the review findings and recommendations would be considered by Cabinet leading to the adoption and actioning of these recommendations.

Original Scope and Methodology

Members agreed that the review would focus on the negative impact of tourism and how the Council might best address these – in particular, in relation to managing the impact on the following areas of Council activity:

- Beach management
- Public toilets
- Waste management
- Traffic management
- Financial management

Members agreed that due to the limited time for conducting this review, it was pertinent to research all these issues independently between meetings of the Working Group. This would include contacting the Local Government Association (LGA) to find out about research work done on best practices by coastal Councils and speaking with senior officers about their contacts with other Councils serving visitor areas. Having reviewed the work to be done, members requested that the review work be conducted over a longer period than the original single day. The Scrutiny Review group had hoped to talk with external agencies (e.g. Kent Police) but this proved impossible within the timeframe.

The review was extended and ended with a meeting of the working party on 30 November 2023 where Councillors heard the final evidence.

Evidence heard by the Scrutiny Review

The Working Party heard evidence from Council officers and Councillors over four sessions.

Positive aspects of tourism: The Review's work began with a presentation on the **positive** aspects of tourism, which pointed out:

1. Tourism is currently worth £212m to the local economy and supports approximately 5,831 jobs in the District;
2. The Volume and Value Survey of Tourism is conducted every two years and uses the Cambridge Economic Impact Model;
3. 2019 figures showed Thanet had 4.6 million visitors;
4. The Kent Residents (Thanet) Survey results showed the coast and beaches were the biggest perceived attractions in Thanet from residents' perspective. There was little difference between Summer Wave and Winter Wave responses to the question "Do you consider your local area to be a tourist destination?";
5. 82% of residents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I support Summer tourism in my local area;"
6. The demographic of visitors to the District is changing, partly as a result of an increase in the number of people visiting friends and families;
7. Tourism is included in the District's Economic Development Strategy, so a separate Tourism Strategy is unnecessary;
8. The Authority works with the sector via the Destination Management Plan and some elements can also be managed via the Local Plan Process.

Moving on to the negative impacts and how the Council might mitigate them, Members worked with senior officers and ward Councillors from areas adversely affected by tourism over several sessions to look at issues of concern in detail, sharing best practice from other areas and considering where we might take action to improve our situation in Thanet.

Beach management: Members asked questions and received the following responses:

1. **Q: What are the factors involved in Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) incidents on our beaches and how can we address them?**
A: Youth gatherings tend to happen in certain spots on beaches towards the end of school exams and at the start of school summer holidays, particularly in Broadstairs and Margate. Local knowledge and relationships are important here to prevent high spirits escalating into ASB. We work with Kent Police but they do not have the resources to patrol hotspots for youth ASB regularly. The District experienced a spike in ASB last summer related to drinking alcohol. The District has experienced spikes in ASB in the past, often related to alcohol. We now have a PSPO in place until 2027 to try to tackle this, and breaching a PSPO is a criminal offence. We are also hopeful that the Government's recently announced Antisocial Behaviour Action Plan will result in some additional funding for the Community Safety Partnership to help tackle localised ASB.
2. **Q: How do we plan with the Police and other agencies to try to prevent ASB on our beaches? Are there things we can do to improve our readiness to tackle ASB?**
A: We meet weekly with Kent Police. We think in advance and plan early for the summer season (e.g. bidding for funds in January for peak season, putting together a multi-agency plan by the end of March.) However, adequate support from Kent Police is never guaranteed as they will always have to prioritise major incidents.
3. **Q: What impact do our Public Space Protection Orders have? Most of the enforcement activities reported to Councillors led to informal resolution of**

anti-social behaviour. What data do we have that can help us understand the impact of PSPOs?

A: We have very little data at present as Kent Police hold the information. We hope that if we can accredit officers in our own team, Kent Police will delegate some of their powers to us which will allow us a more direct intervention role and give us more data.

4. **Q: What information do we have on best practice in other Authorities?**

A: We have worked extensively with Bournemouth City Council which faces similar challenges to Thanet, although they only have one beach to patrol:

- They operate from a central location on the beach where agencies meet daily to discuss issues. They have CCTV there, so they can easily monitor activities on their beach. This would be ideal but is not practical for all our beaches.
- Bournemouth also operates in zones on their beach, which is an approach we are also adopting in Thanet, as it is useful for attending and responding to incidents.
- Bournemouth developed the Beach Check app after Covid, so beach users could monitor congestion in advance to support social distancing. They actively input information for visitors. Thanet was an early adopter of the app, which we publicise to try to spread the load of visitors from the most popular beaches.
- Some Council officers in Bournemouth are accredited to use delegated enforcement powers from the Police.

5. **Q: Do we plan to offer accredited training to officers in the beach management team to enable them to issue Fixed Penalty Notices? Can we ensure staff offered training stay with the service (e.g. officers trained agreeing to remain here for a stipulated period)?**

A: This is under consideration at present, so a recommendation from the working group could be helpful.

6. **Q: Broadstairs Town Council has engaged a security firm to patrol beaches and has built the costs of this into its annual budget. Could TDC adopt a similar approach?**

A: At present the budget would not permit this for all areas affected by ASB, but if other Town & Parish Councils wish to work with private firms we can support them.

7. **Q: We understand overnight camping on beaches can become a focus for ASB: could providing approved camping facilities help address this? Could we provide beach huts on more beaches around the Isle & equip some for overnight stays?**

A: This could work but would require investment. Use of beach huts for overnight stays is an option under consideration, but responsibility for these currently sits with Your Leisure rather than TDC.

8. **Q: As members we are aware of complaints during the summer season about jet ski users coming close to beaches and even harassing swimmers. What can be done about this – and how can we ensure beach users know how to report incidents?**

A: There are limited approved launching and landing places for jet skis around Thanet – although this is ignored by a small number of jet skiers. The Water User Group monitors incidents of this kind, which happily are rare. The number to call is shown on all local beach signage and on our website, and members who receive complaints are encouraged to share it.

Public toilets: Members asked questions and received the following responses:

1. **Q: Is refurbishment of public toilets now part of Cabinet's plans for the District?**

A: This is a priority in the current Council term, with plans due to go to Scrutiny and Cabinet shortly. A schedule over several years is being drawn up, with the facilities in the worst state being tackled first.

2. **Q: Can public toilets be kept open for longer into the evenings during peak season to cater better for visitors?**
A: Staffing this is challenging, but if the Working Party wished to recommend this and Cabinet approved it, a budget for additional staffing would need to be found.
3. **Q: Can event toilets be provided on beaches and in visitor hotspots where public toilets are not available (e.g. Botany Bay) or when toilet facilities have to close early?**
A: This is under consideration but is too expensive to provide everywhere.
4. **Q: How can we collaborate with Town & Parish Councils on toilet facilities – e.g. possible assistance with cleaning/ opening & closing out of hours?**
A: Some collaboration has happened (e.g. event toilets at the Western Undercliff in Ramsgate last year) but there is scope for more joint working in future.
5. **Q: What collaboration with other organisations over provision of toilet facilities might be possible – e.g. do we/ could we work with hotels and hospitality venues to offer access to their toilet facilities in exchange for reduced business rates or similar?**
A: This is not under consideration but if recommended could be looked at in future.

Waste management: Members asked questions and received the following responses:

1. **Q: What can we do to reduce waste left by visitors, especially on our beaches, and how can we manage visitors' waste most effectively?**
A: Waste management for the visitor economy is improving, thanks in part to larger receptacles on different locations on the beaches, more staff patrolling beaches, beachside recycling bins, toy recycling and litter picking stations on beaches.
2. **Q: Our simple 'The bin is here' banner signs on beaches, in parks and in other visitor locations appeared very effective: could simply increasing the numbers and locations of these be a cheap way to help?**
A: More and clearer signage is under consideration, both to show bin locations and give information about e.g. Public Space Protection Orders and penalties littering can incur. Other ways of raising visitors' awareness of the impact of their waste included work by our Education Officer and partnership work with community groups (e.g. RiseUpCleanUp's exhibition of waste at Margate railway station).
3. **Q: Could placing waste bins by bus stops mitigate littering, both during peak tourist season and at other times?**
A: It definitely could, but the cost of emptying must be factored in, which means we are likely only to be able to install new bins at the most heavily used bus stops.
4. **Q: How well are the new street and beachside recycling bins working in getting visitors to separate out recyclable waste?**
A: Frankly, these are making only a modest difference at present, but we hope to make them increasingly visible in future and back this up with proactive work by beach wardens. The existence of a water fountain on Margate Sands and plans for similar in Ramsgate & Broadstairs, plus the development of Refill water bottle refilling schemes across the District, should all help reduce the number of plastic bottles discarded by visitors.
5. **Q: How can we stop visitors staying in holiday lets and camper vans filling street bins with domestic waste? This is often pulled out by gulls & foxes and contributes significantly to seafront litter, as well as making it difficult for others to use those bins.**
A: This is a longstanding problem that involves ensuring landlords and letting agents are providing proper waste management facilities to short-term residents, including information on bin collection days and what to put in which bin. We will continue to work on this.

6. Q: **How much do we spend on beach cleaning each year? Are we safe to assume that most of this is spent cleaning up after visitors? What can be done to reduce this?**

A: We spend about £120k per year cleaning beaches. This includes year-round cleaning but is heavily weighted to peak holiday periods. We are trying to reduce this using initiatives mentioned earlier but are always up for considering others.

7. Q: **What are our chances of obtaining external funding for beach cleaning in future e.g. from Southern Water?**

A: This appears to work better when led by community organisations like the Friends of Botany Bay and Kingsgate than by the Council, but there is potential for the Council to work with external sponsors in future too.

8. Q: **Can we run cleansing contracts that are dependent on the weather, to cover e.g. the sudden hot spell last September that filled local beaches with unexpected numbers of visitors?**

A: This is one of the benefits of using some temporary contract staff as part of our teams, as it gives us greater flexibility for situations like this.

Traffic management: Members asked questions and received the following responses:

1. Q: **What income do we receive from parking charges? What are the rules on generating a surplus on parking revenue, and what can it be spent on?**

A: The value of parking income is typically £200k off season and £300k during the peak times. On average the Council receives about £400k per year in car parking income. The Traffic Act 1984 specifies that the parking service cannot make a “profit”: charges can only be made to control traffic flow. KCC Highways are in charge of on-street parking so we have little room to implement changes, but all ideas will be considered in the Parking Strategy review.

2. Q: **What possibilities are there for introducing e.g. day/ seasonal passes for visitors?**

A: These can be considered in the Parking Strategy review: please suggest this.

3. Q: **Could making parking cheaper at weekends encourage more support for local businesses on those days? Some towns have short-term on-street free parking spaces but others do not: can we consider this for all our towns to encourage both visitors and residents to stop off for short periods and help support local businesses?**

A: Named car parks in Thanet’s main towns are free on Saturdays to encourage local shopping (mainly aimed at residents). Extending this could be considered as part of the Parking Strategy review.

4. Q: **Can we improve advance information (online via traffic signage on the A299 and on approaches to popular areas) about our car parks, to help visitors find them and encourage their use over on-street parking? Can we make our car parks cheaper than on-street parking to encourage use?**

A: This can also be considered as part of the Parking Strategy review.

5. Q: **What potential is there to generate more off-street coach and campervan parking, including overnight facilities for campervans (like ‘aires’ in France, for example)?**

A: Overnight campervan parking is a good idea that works well in other areas – but it would require substantial investment in facilities and enough space. Any new overnight parking would also require a change in traffic regulations. We do have some areas (e.g. Palm Bay) that could be suitable, so worth recommending that we research our options. Coach parking is trickier because of the size of sites required but a few possibilities (e.g. Dane Road in Broadstairs, Cliftonville) could be considered. This will be considered during the Parking Strategy review.

6. Q: **What possibilities might there be for:**

- **establishing additional parking near the most popular beaches**
- **preventing vehicular access to some of the most overused residential streets?**
- **otherwise reducing nuisance parking in the most popular areas – Kingsgate and Botany Bay in particular?**
- **making better use of the Beach Check app e.g. to discourage visitors from coming to Kingsgate & Botany Bay?**

A: Significant work was done on a residents' parking scheme for Kingsgate but this did not get Joint Transportation Board approval. We could consider single lines to limit parking, but enforcement would be difficult as we do not have towing powers or access to 24-hour storage for towed vehicles. Some residents now rent out parking spaces and garages, and the volume of complaints has gone down, but problems remain – and there is very little land locally for additional parking lots. A trial, limiting access to certain streets, could be considered but would need consultation and enforcement. This could be worth suggesting to the Parking Strategy review. We cannot restrict visitors' access to the bays on foot as they are public land.

7. **Q: Are seasonal park & ride facilities worth considering for high-traffic areas like Kingsgate or Margate Main Sands? Can we 'think outside the box' on this e.g. outlying car parks with electric bike hire/ cargo bikes/ scooters etc?**

A: These are worth considering but would require access to large outlying parking areas which will be difficult to find, plus considerable set-up & running costs.

Financial management: Members asked questions and received the following responses:

1. **Q: How can the Council recoup the extra costs we incur through the increase in AirBNB and short-term holiday rentals?**

A: Theoretically short-term holiday lets contribute to the Council's costs either via Council tax or business rates depending on the level of use of the property. In practice it is difficult to keep information on short-term rentals up to date and know they are being charged appropriately. Officers support Government proposals to establish a national register of short-term holiday lets.

2. **Q: Do officers support the introduction of a tourist tax when this is permitted?**

A: Officers would be happy to have that discussion with members. Authorities going along this route suggest even a modest charge could generate millions of additional revenue every year with little impact on visitor numbers, so this is worth considering.

3. **Q: One way we seek to recoup some of the costs of the visitor economy is by charging for events. What evidence do we have on the impact of event charges (including parking management and loss of parking spaces) on the likelihood of external organisers using Thanet for their events?**

A: We follow a formal event process which uses a multi-agency approach to ensure that impacts on the area are taken into consideration. We seek feedback from organisers and feed that into the development of future charging policy.

4. **Q: As members we work with many successful events hosted in the District, from Folk Week to Dickens Week to Ramsgate Carnival, which draw in visitors from outside the area. Organisers of these events sometimes say they feel unsupported by the Council and smaller organisations are put off by high event and parking suspension charges. How can we work more effectively to encourage and support small-scale events which attract visitors as well as appealing to our own residents?**

A: TDC seeks to work with event organisers to make their events a worthwhile and positive experience for visitors and local residents. Some events started small but are now attracting 40,000 people. This meant that these events were no longer community events but rather commercial events. Event fees are £375 per day for

most events at the higher end and £75 per day at the lower end. Suspension of parking charges during events would be a decision that would require KCC consent.

5. **Q: A previous Scrutiny Review Working Party considered how we can improve our relationships with Thanet's Town & Parish Councils. The group's report was approved by Cabinet and its recommendations are beginning to be implemented. Parish and Town Councils are often the intermediaries between local event organisers and TDC, and local event organisers approach them to help with covering event fees, costs of parking bay suspensions etc. How can we work more effectively with Town & Parish Councils to support events that generate visitors and provide income to help cover our costs, without simply passing our charges on to a lower tier of local government?**

A: We are building relationships with Town & Parish Councils but there is more to do. We can gain much from their detailed knowledge of the areas they serve and should not simply be looking at them as organisations to whom we can delegate responsibilities. We support the re-establishing the Town & Parish Forum to stimulate two-way dialogue.

Recommendations of the Scrutiny Review

The working party concluded its work with a meeting on 30 November 2023 to further consider and evaluate the evidence it had heard and draw up its recommendations. Members identified some areas where the Council could start some initiatives for mitigating the negative impact of activities associated with tourist visits to the district. They drafted a series of recommendations which they collated under the five broad themes of the review, with most recommendations cutting across several themes. These are set out below.

Recommendation 1: Beach management

Improve beach management in peak season through measures (some already being trialled here), including:

- Clearer signage on all beaches, with zoning for faster response to incidents
- CCTV Command Centres on all beaches to monitor safety & tackle ASB
- Multi-agency patrols on beaches and hotspot areas to pre-empt trouble
- Upskilling of TDC Enforcement Officers to accredited levels, to enable them to issue Fixed Penalty Notices
- Promoting the Beach Check app to visitors to share information & help spread visitor numbers.

Justification for the proposed recommendation

We are recommending this because: These measures have been trialled in Thanet and/or used elsewhere effectively to improve monitoring & response times, tackle ASB, issue penalties and ensure visitors have up-to-date, accurate information, ensuring a pleasant time for visitors and minimising costs and inconvenience to residents and the Council.

Recommendation 2: Public toilets

Improve the provision of public toilets, particularly those most used by visitors, by:

- Accelerating the planned public toilet refurbishment programme and ensuring regular maintenance of all public toilets
- Considering ways to extend opening hours of beachside toilets during peak season -eg through closer collaboration with Town & Parish Councils
- Investigating possibilities of collaborating with hospitality businesses to offer toilet facilities to visitors when public toilets are closed
- Setting up & managing additional temporary toilet facilities along beaches and at popular venues during peak season and for special events.

Justification for the proposed recommendation

We are recommending this because:

Toilet facilities are already a concern for local residents, and demand for these rises significantly when we have visitors. For special events (e.g. Broadstairs Folk Week) or areas with little in the way of current facilities (e.g. Botany Bay, Western Undercliff Beach) we need additional toilets available on a temporary basis for reasons of hygiene and to ensure visitors are comfortable and wish to visit again.

Recommendation 3: Waste management

Work to maintain cleanliness, manage waste effectively, improve recycling rates and minimise costs of managing additional waste at peak periods by:

- Ensuring all beaches and visitor attractions are well supplied with ordinary waste bins and clearly labelled recycling bins, and that these are emptied frequently, particularly in peak season
- Ensuring locations of bins are clearly flagged and visible from a distance (eg by use of more large, highly coloured 'The bin is here →' banners on beaches, in parks etc)
- Providing 2-minute litter pick stations on all main beaches
- Providing toy recycling at all Thanet's beaches over the summer season
- Ensuring penalties for littering and Thanet's PSPO rules are clearly displayed at all beaches, parks and visitor attractions, and ensuring our Enforcement Officers can levy fines where necessary
- Seeking to ensure all short-term lets have appropriate recycling & waste management information & facilities in place.

Justification for the proposed recommendation

We are recommending this because:

We need to make it easy for visitors to keep Thanet beautiful by taking their litter home or leaving it in a nearby bin, and to help them to recycle as much of their waste as possible. Visitors staying in holiday-lets need to know how to manage their waste responsibly and have the right facilities to do so. And the minority of visitors who spoil the area for others must understand the penalties they face for doing so.

Recommendation 4: Traffic management

Proactively manage traffic and parking issues during peak season by measures such as:

- Identifying problem spots and considering what traffic control measures may be appropriate to address the issues - e.g. creating low traffic areas, additional temporary car parks, better signage to car parks, reduced costs for car parks of on-street parking etc
- Ensuring car parks are regularly patrolled to reduce ASB
- As part of the Parking Strategy review, consider measures to simplify parking for residents and visitors (eg parking passes), to make best use of underused parking facilities and generate additional income (eg coach parking; overnight stay facilities for campervans, along the lines of 'aires' in mainland Europe) and to encourage visitors to use shops & hospitality facilities in local towns & villages.

Justification for the proposed recommendation

We are recommending this because: To improve travel convenience for both local residents and visitors to the district. To increase positive visitor experience.

Recommendation 5: Financial management/Maximising income from the visitor economy

Actively investigate opportunities to maximise income to the Council from the visitor economy to help balance its costs to the Council - for example:

- Levying additional Council tax on second homes
- When permitted, levying a modest tourism tax on overnight stays
- Ensuring holiday lets contribute to funding the costs they impose (via Council tax or business rates)

- Taking a robust approach with Southern Water over beach pollution, including obtaining financial contributions to help improve our visitor facilities
- Accrediting officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for ASB to nip problems in the bud
- Exploring opportunities to provide paid-for facilities (eg overnight campervan parking, beach huts with facilities for overnight stays)
- Reviewing our charging policy for community-led events to ensure small-scale events are affordable for organisers
- Implementing the recommendations of the OSP WP report on work with Town & Parish Councils on working together to support events and generate visitor numbers
- Continuing to seek external funding to support our visitor economy.

Justification for the proposed recommendation

We are recommending this because: We want a booming visitor economy but we are acutely aware of the additional costs visitors bring, so we need to make every effort to secure income for the Council to set against those costs.