

WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN 2018-20





INTRODUCTION

In 2012, Wrexham County Borough Council produced its first Destination Management Plan. Much has changed in the area since then. Tourism spend is now estimated at £116m and supports over 1,600 jobs in the County Borough. This spend has been significant as it has increased by 38% during the last 5-years.

Since 2012, there has also been significant invest in Chirk Castle, Erddig Hall, the Trevor Basin, Bangor-on-Dee racecourse, and a renewed focus on town centre regeneration with the new £4.5m arts, markets and cultural hub – Tŷ Pawb. The bar and restaurant scene has had new operators and investment, and a number of major events have been developed such as FOCUS Wales, Underneath the Arches, the Victorian Christmas Markets, concerts at the Racecourse Stadium and Wales ComicCon.

The new 'This is Wrexham' partnership – the first of its kind in Wales - launched in 2017 and has brought a renewed focus from the tourism trade towards working together. Led by the private sector, the partnership will deliver this new action plan alongside Wrexham County Borough Council and use their own finance from membership fees to access funding to support these goals.

Our new Destination Action Plan for Wrexham County Borough covers the period to 2020. It:

- Provides a strategic focus to the development and management of the visitor product/ experience;
- Identifies clear, co-ordinated and prioritised actions;
- Outlines a partnership delivery framework for both the public and private sectors.

We're confident that the tourism scene in Wrexham County Borough will continue to flourish through further investment, job creation, strong marketing and a first-class welcome - and we hope that you can join us for the exciting ride!



Cllr Terry Evans

*Lead Member Economic
Development and Regeneration
Wrexham County Borough
Council*



Sam Regan

*Chair – This Is Wrexham
Partnership*



Joe Bickerton

*Destination Manager, Wrexham
County Borough Council*



STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Wrexham County Borough has a number of strengths. These include iconic heritage sites, its location and accessibility, the outdoors and outstanding landscapes, a strong sense of place, and the strong support infrastructure that has developed over the last five years.

Looking to the future, there are challenges. Resources remain limited. Key sites (like Chirk Castle, Erddig Hall and the Trevor Basin) are increasingly operating at capacity which limits opportunities to promote them as key draws.

There are, however, opportunities for the future. In Wrexham, Tŷ Pawb, events, redevelopment of the General Market and Butchers Market create an opportunity for a visitor quarter. The World Heritage Site Masterplan represents an opportunity for resolving long standing visitor issues in the Trevor Basin and creating an iconic visitor product. The 'This is Wrexham' Tourism Partnership creates opportunities to access funding, and there is an opportunity to further develop the travel trade market.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The Destination Action Plan is underpinned by a number of guiding principles:

- Destination development can take decades – this plan is a part of that longer and wider process;
- A focus on two broad markets and market positioning concepts – Rural Explorers and Culture Wrexham;
- Partnership working through the 'This is Wrexham' Tourism Partnership;
- Cross border working, particularly with the NE Wales marketing partnership;
- Further developing the 'sense of place' in the County Borough;
- Cross selling opportunities and developing visitor focused itineraries to add depth to the visitor experience;
- Prioritising activities.





PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The Destination Plan is designed to address destination product development and management priorities through four project areas.

WORLD HERITAGE SITE PLUS

The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal WHS is a key asset for Wrexham CB and north Wales but is not performing to its potential. Priorities for development include improved visitor management and wider site development, cross selling and creating stronger connections with other assets in the area. The development of the Masterplan will be instrumental in this.

WREXHAM TOWN

Wrexham town presents significant opportunities for the development of tourism in the Borough – it can attract a different audience to the rest of the Borough, and the spend opportunities for visitors are potentially significant. The visitor economy needs to develop in parallel with the broader regeneration of the town centre.

Priorities include a more distinctive positioning as the cultural centre for North Wales (building on the opening of Tŷ Pawb), development and diversification of the retail and evening economy offers, events and animation of the town including the development of a signature event, and further accommodation development. Development of visitor infrastructure (like coach parking and a better located TIC) and further product development (of e.g. the General Market and Butchers Market) are also priorities.

SENSE OF PLACE

Sense of place is about building a distinctive and quality visitor experience and celebrating the assets of the area (the heritage, the food, the environment, the culture). Significant progress has been made over the last five years and this should continue. Elements of this include promoting local produce, business networking, familiarisation visits. There is also a need to promote the sector locally through, for example, colleges and a 'hearts and minds' campaign targeting not only residents of the county borough but also non-tourism businesses.

VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

The World Heritage Site has a key role in attracting visitors to the County Borough, and this should be a central of promotional activity. However, there is a need for a separate promotion of Wrexham town, with different messaging and targeting a more local audience.

There are currently two campaigns covering Wrexham CB - i.e. NE Wales and This is Wrexham. There is scope and a need to continue both of these – both 'brands' have a relevance. There is a need to cross-sell other opportunities more – e.g. through itineraries or giving visitors suggestions of additional things to see or do.

Other opportunities to be pursued include potentially developing the travel trade market, relocating the TIC, and developing signage schemes.



ACTION PLAN

Projects have categorised in two ways:

- Catalytic and maintenance products – catalytic projects are projects that have the potential to further transform or develop the destination. Maintenance projects will continue to develop the destination in terms of continuing to undertake the basics of destination management, marketing and product development that adds to the overall depth of the offer (but without the transformative impact of catalytic projects).
- ‘Must do’s’ and ‘nice to have’s’ – ‘must do’s’ are simply that – essential projects that need to be delivered (or progressed) over the next three years. ‘Nice to have’s’ are desirable projects that should be taken forward if resources permit. These have been divided into high priority and medium priority.

The following table summarises projects against these two categories.

| | Catalytic Projects | Maintenance |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Must do's | WHS Masterplan Tŷ Pawb | Wrexham Positioning Networking This is Wrexham NE Wales Hearts and Minds |
| Nice to have's – high | Signature cultural event | Events programme Group visits – Wrexham infrastructure Brand Collateral Travel trade |
| Nice to have's - medium | Accommodation development and welcome | Brymbo Heritage Wrexham CB Heritage Wrexham Visitor management Food – promotion of local food Skills / Sector Development White on brown & gateway signage |





The following table summarises an outline action plan which is primarily for the This is Wrexham Tourism Partnership and Wrexham Country Borough Council. It covers the period to 2020 but is expected to evolve during this period.

Glossary:

WCBC – Wrexham Country Borough Council

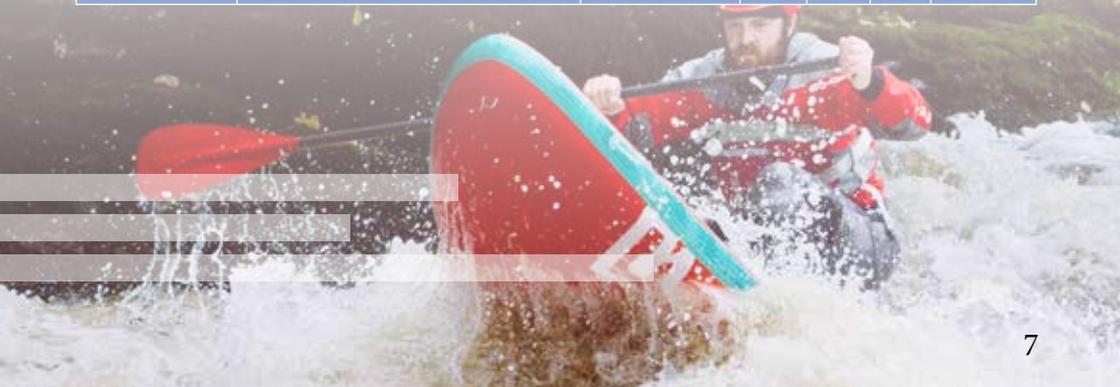
CRT – Canal and River Trust

TiW – This is Wrexham Tourism Partnership

| Project | Description | Project type/ priority | Timescale | | | Project lead |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-----------|------|------|---------------------------------|
| | | | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | |
| WHS Masterplan | Complete the production of Masterplan and adopt it. | Catalytic Must do | ✓ | | | WCBC, CRT |
| | Implementation. | Catalytic Must do | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | WCBC, CRT |
| Brymbo Heritage | On-going tourism & marketing support for implementation of the seven-year BIG Lottery's Create Your Space programme. | Maintenance Nice to have – medium | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Brymbo Heritage Project |
| Wrexham CB heritage | Investigate the feasibility of a borough wide heritage interpretation programme as part of the Heritage Strategy. This could include l-beacons / digital interpretation, or more human based interpretation and storytelling (probably through guided tours). | Maintenance Nice to have – medium | | ✓ | | WCBC Heritage Services |
| Tŷ Pawb | Opening of Tŷ Pawb and ensuring its integration within the visitor economy | Catalytic Must do | ✓ | | | WCBC |
| Signature Event | Development of a signature cultural event – ideally annual, multiday with a regional pulling power. | Catalytic Nice to have - high | | ✓ | ✓ | Tŷ Pawb / Private Sector / WCBC |
| Positioning | Stronger positioning and promotion of the town centre – particularly through This is Wrexham website, social media and PR (targeting a catchment of approximately an hour's travel time). | Maintenance Must do | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | WCBC / TiW |



| Project | Description | Project type/ priority | Timescale | | | Project lead |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------|------|------|--------------------------|
| | | | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | |
| Events programme | Further development of the events programme. | Maintenance Nice to have - high | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Private sector WCBC / |
| Markets | Investigate the development of General Market and Butchers Markets as more visitor focused resources. | Maintenance Nice to have - high | ✓ | | | WCBC |
| Group visits - infrastructure | Start investigating the feasibility of a specific coach parking location in town and marketing of town as a group travel destination. | Maintenance Nice to have – high | ✓ | ✓ | | WCBC |
| Visitor management | Investigate the options for a broader visitor management scheme including visual visitor information and promotion of events in a smart, sustainable way in the town and on the approaches. | Maintenance Nice to have - medium | | ✓ | | WCBC |
| Accommodation development and welcome | Encourage accommodation development – both in the town but also in the broader area. Diverse accommodation needs for broad audience, including alternative accommodation such as glamping. Also, invest in developing the front of house and in-room visitor welcome at existing providers. | Maintenance Nice to have - medium | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | WCBC |
| Networking | Continued networking and familiarisation visits to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop business awareness / opportunities • Improve inter relationships in COUNTY • To support collective improvement in | Maintenance Must do | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | WCBC / TiW |





| Project | Description | Project type/ priority | Timescale | | | Project lead |
|----------------------------------|---|---|-----------|------|------|---------------------------------------|
| | | | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | |
| | Tourism industry | | | | | |
| Hearts and minds | Development of an on-going This is Wrexham 'hearts and minds' campaign. This should include the development of appropriate brand collateral, a local PR and social media campaign, and engagement with local businesses to cross promote the brand. | Maintenance Must do | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | WCBC / TiW |
| Brand collateral | Development of a photo and content library to provide tourism businesses with standard resources for use in their own marketing Brand collective / print & digital to raise awareness of TiW brand. | Maintenance Nice to have - high | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | WCBC / TiW |
| Food | Promotion of local food and local food producers within tourism businesses. | Maintenance Nice to have - medium | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | WCBC / TiW |
| Skills / Sector Development | Promotion of the opportunities tourism sector within school and colleges / work with businesses to provide quality opportunities. Link into good practice with other North Wales Authorities. | Maintenance Nice to have - medium | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | WCBC / TiW |
| This is Wrexham | Continue the This Is Wrexham website and social media campaign, (with a focus on cross-selling opportunities) and further developing the This is Wrexham card. | Maintenance Must do | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | TiW |
| NE Wales | Continue and redevelop the NE Wales tourism partnership with Denbighshire and Flintshire, with aim of promoting offer to wider UK audience. | Maintenance Must do | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | WCBC plus Denbighshire and Flintshire |
| Travel trade | Explore the potential of further travel trade and cruise promotion and develop targeted itineraries. | Maintenance Nice to have - high | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | WCBC / TiW |
| Wrexham TIC | Investigate and pursue the expansion and improved offer and opportunities for the Wrexham TIC. | Maintenance Nice to have - high | ✓ | ✓ | | WCBC |
| White on brown & gateway signage | Review white-on-brown signing policy and application process to make it more transparent for the tourism industry 'Wrexham County Borough' Gateway signage on key routes into County (review & replace). | Maintenance Nice to have - medium | ✓ | ✓ | | WCBC |