



Merthyr Tydfil

Destination Management Plan 2016-2018



Croeso Cymru
Visit Wales



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1. FOREWORD

Tourism is vitally important to the economy of Merthyr Tydfil and offers huge opportunities as a destination through our natural environment, the region's unique history and its excellent geographical location. Much of the analysis set out in the previous Destination Management Plan (DMP) is still relevant - however, it is now time to review this in light of changing circumstances and new opportunities and re-evaluate the progress that has been made to date.

The new Merthyr Tydfil Destination Management Plan has been subject to extensive consultation and engagement with public, private and third sector organisations. The priorities of the plan will be delivered in partnership with local stakeholders to establish a destination that demonstrates a commitment to partnership working. To deliver on the DMP, everybody has a part to play in ensuring Merthyr Tydfil sustains its position as a diverse and welcoming visitor destination in which people wish to live, visit and enjoy.

The previous DMP for Merthyr Tydfil was produced back in 2013 and has served us well. This period has seen the accommodation sector in particular grow significantly in terms of numbers. Our natural environment has given rise to a thriving activity tourism offer which has seen more international visitors come to the region. We are proud to say that BikePark Wales has matured into a truly

world class facility over the last few years with planned developments for Rock UK Summit Centre surely putting the attraction in a similar stature. In addition, we are confident that the new facilities such as Parkwood Outdoors Dolygaer, situated near Pontsticill, will strengthen this sector further. Our suite of activity tourism opportunities, combined with our unique cultural heritage offer, made up of attractions such as Cyfarthfa Park & Museum and our Welsh cultural centre - Canolfan Soar, will undoubtedly ensure that Merthyr Tydfil sustains its position as a first class visitor destination.

Merthyr Tydfil has a huge amount to offer visitors, but we are still an evolving destination and are always looking for ways in which to improve our current tourism offer. This new DMP and complementary Action Plan, which sets out priorities for delivery, provides a blueprint for the next three years.



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2. INTRODUCTION TO DESTINATION MANAGEMENT:

2.1 WHAT IS A DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN?

A Destination Management Plan (DMP) is a strategic document collaboratively produced with a range of stakeholders aiming to manage a region over a set period. The DMP is intended to be a practical working document that articulates the roles and responsibilities of a range of stakeholders set against clear objectives identified in the Action Plan and positively contributes to the visitor's experience.

The DMP sets out a vision for Merthyr Tydfil's future, exploring connectivity linked directly to the experience of both visitors and residents. The document will cover a three-year period, and in doing so, give all those concerned with tourism in the region a formalised timeframe to develop, implement and evaluate their work whilst gaining an insight into how a collaborative approach to 'Destination Management' can have a positive impact on a region like Merthyr Tydfil.

At a national level, the development and evolution of the tourism sector has been recognised by Welsh Government as one of the nine key sectors of the economy. Its strategy for tourism 2013-20, 'Partnership for Growth', identifies 'Destination Management' as being fundamental in improving the appeal of County Borough's throughout Wales and emphasises the importance of outdoor tourism, the environment, heritage, culture and events to the Welsh economy.

Destination Merthyr Tydfil is determined to see the provision of a high quality visitor experience which exceeds the expectations of our visitors, positively influencing people's views of the area (and Wales in general), ensuring repeat visits and recommendations thereafter.



2.2 A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH - THE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP:

To implement, manage and evaluate the impact of the Destination Management Plan, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council will co-ordinate the varied range of stakeholders and internal departments set-out in the 'Action Plan'. This collaboration of the Local Authority and key stakeholders will be called the Destination Management Partnership.

Destination Management means long-term collaboration between stakeholders such as the Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust, tourist attractions, accommodation providers, businesses, traders and residents – to ensure the best possible visitor experience, as well as the evolution and sustainability of the destination. It is essential that all stakeholders work in partnership to make sure there are no gaps or failures in the provision and that the package is professional and covers everything required by the visitor.

Stakeholders will again commit to handling pre-determined strategic issues in servicing visitor needs and by the Local Authority managing a tool such as a new Destination Management Plan, which invaluable helps both businesses and organisations to visualise the complete visitor 'journey' can help achieve Merthyr Tydfil becoming a first class tourism destination.



2.3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT:

Visit Wales understand that making a destination work effectively from a visitor's perspective is essential to destination management. For a destination to work it needs buy-in from all stakeholders involved, working in partnership to make sure there are no gaps or failures in the provision.

The Local Authority understands the importance of evolving its current Destination Management Plan, ensuring it aligns itself to our Corporate Priorities and Local Development Plan. Furthermore, MTCBC has identified the DMP as a priority going forward, having strategically linked its Action Plan to our Corporate Plan and embedded it into both our Economic Growth Plan and Strategic Programme, which includes the Vibrant & Viable Places and EU-funded programmes.

Some of the important pieces that make up the entire destination include:

- Visitor information provided by the Local Authority and Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust
- Accommodation, attractions and activity development
- Cultural and countryside experiences by localised and national organisations
- Transport links and maintenance of all forms of travel routes across the County Borough
- Car parking, toilets and public buildings / spaces
- Developing a diverse, viable and vibrant economy
- Interaction with the host communities

MTCBC and our stakeholders knowing and understanding how the above pieces fit together is key to the partnership achieving an effective Destination Management Plan.



2.4 BACKGROUND OF TOURISM IN MERTHYR TYDFIL:

The tourism industry is recognised as being a vital contributor to the Merthyr Tydfil economy and in recent years has seen the sector grow with the emergence of activity tourism in the area coupled with the regions significant industrial past and historical value.

The town is ideally situated at the crossroads of Wales's major transport road the A470 and the A465, the main artery that links Swansea to the Midlands (England). With an excellent central location, Merthyr Tydfil is a perfect base for exploring the Valleys, Brecon Beacons National Park, Cardiff and Swansea. Furthermore, the town is less than two hours from Birmingham, Bristol, Bath, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Worcester, Hereford and Swindon.

The majority of current visitors to Merthyr Tydfil are considered day visitors, making up 84% of the visits to the County Borough, compared to 9% who stay with friends / family, and the remaining 7% that reside at local accommodation providers. The majority of day visitors come to Merthyr Tydfil to experience the area's cultural heritage, activities, various attractions and shops. Alternatively, the overnight visitors who stay in the County Borough tend to use primary attractions such as BikePark Wales, Rock UK Summit Centre, Brecon Mountain Railway and Cyfarthfa Park & Museum, whilst again using Merthyr Tydfil's ideal location as a base to explore the surrounding areas.

3. PROGRESS FROM 2013 TO 2015:

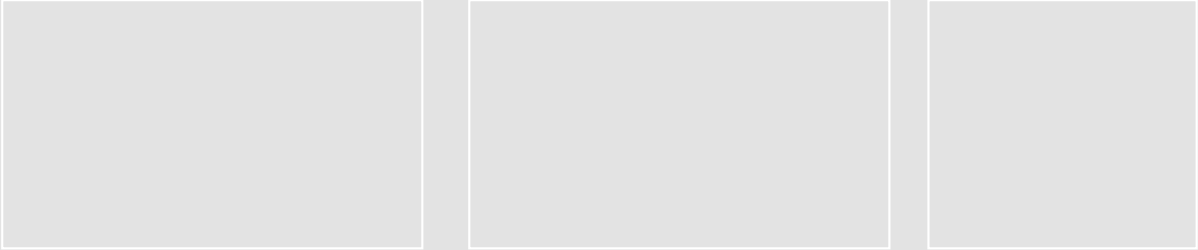

3.1 IMPACT OF THE INITIAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN:

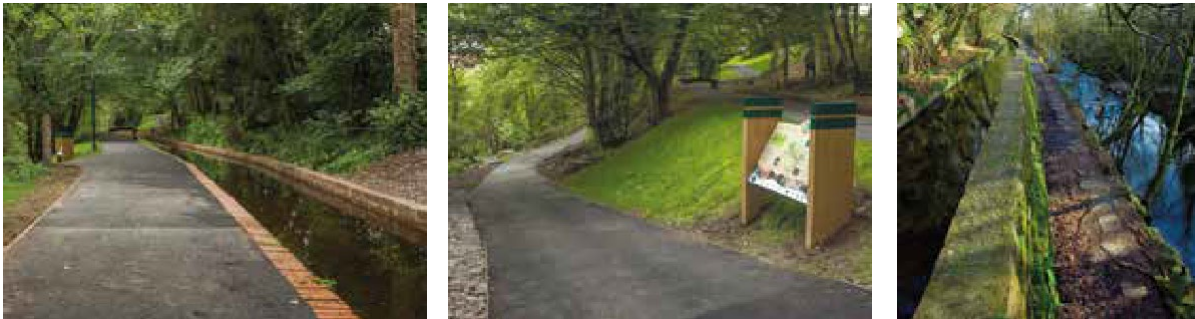
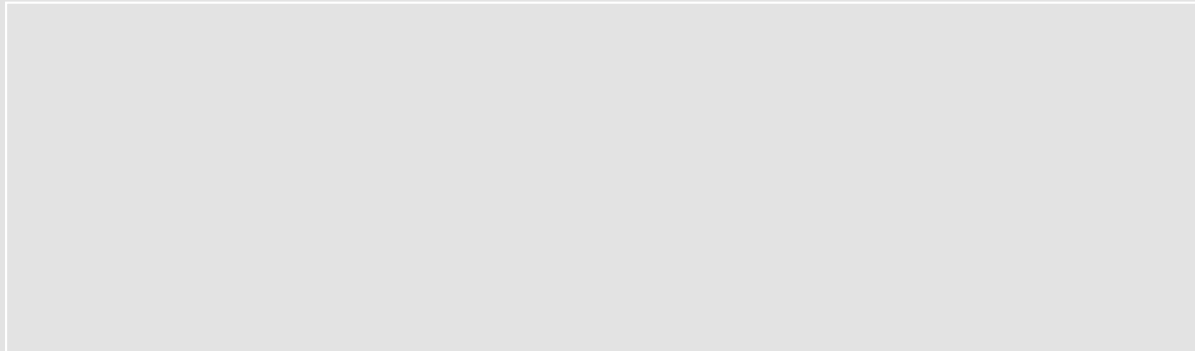
Following the implementation of Merthyr Tydfil's initial Destination Management Plan in 2013, the Local Authority co-ordinated the delivery of the Action Plan which involved managing / developing the tourism infrastructure, overseeing a number of significant projects and encouraging substantial investment into the area; all in partnership with our key stakeholders.

The work over this period has certainly made Merthyr Tydfil a more sustainable tourism destination, created jobs, attracted inward investment and afforded businesses the opportunity to take advantage of the economic benefits associated with being situated in an evolving, first class visitor destination.

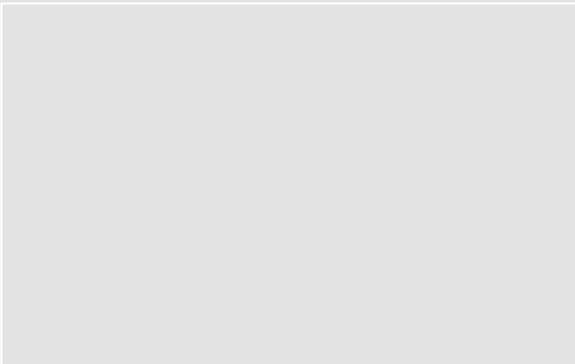
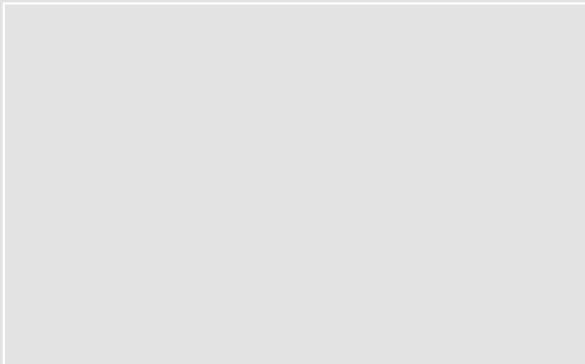






3.2 KEY PROJECTS 2013-15 - PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:

Project	Description	Funding
BikePark Wales	<p>Since opening in 2013, BikePark Wales has fast become a key attraction in the area, strengthening Merthyr Tydfil's position as one of the most dynamic activity tourism destinations in Wales. Recognised as Europe's only year-round, purpose-built, gravity trail centre. To date, BikePark Wales has seen over 155,000 people visit the facility, with a large proportion of these being international visitors. During the implementation of our initial DMP, the Local Authority recognised the strength that the centre brings to the region, and in doing so arranged for the Directors of the company to familiarise themselves with other tourism sector businesses and attractions in the County Borough in order to promote the whole of Merthyr Tydfil to its visitors.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private investment • Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council • Heads of the Valley's Programme funding
Cyfarthfa Heritage Area	<p>The Destination Management Partnership has significantly enhanced the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area through a number of strategic projects whilst adhering to a definitive Conservation Area Management Plan. During the initial implementation of the original DMP, the Local Authority successfully secured HLF funding to develop the key attraction, assisting it in becoming Wales's third most popular free tourist attraction. The Cyfarthfa Heritage Area emphasises its educational qualities too, becoming a key resource to both schools and visitors alike and depicting the story of Merthyr Tydfil's industrial using the attractions Grade I* listed buildings and Grade II* listed park and gardens. In doing so, the facility has seen an increase in visitors over the last three years.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Lottery Fund • Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council • Heads of the Valleys Programme • CADW • Welsh Government • Valleys Regional Park Programme • Vibrant and Viable Places Programme

Project	Description	Funding
Cyfarthfa Leat and Old Gurnos Tramway	<p>This £1.6m scheme focussed on the restoration of the Leat ancient watercourse structure, preventing its collapse and ensuring the ancient watercourse continues to supply water to Cyfarthfa Lake. The attraction is recognised as being a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), providing the varied habitat for both plants and animal life. The project redeveloped the tramway that runs adjacent to the Leat, utilising the original stone sleepers that still hold visible imprints of the original tramway. The project was successfully launched in 2013 and received over 30,000 visitors in its first year of opening.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valleys Regional Park Programme • CADW • Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council • Heads of the Valleys Programme
Cyfarthfa Park	<p>The £3.3m transformation of Cyfarthfa Park commenced back in 2012 and saw Merthyr Tydfil's key visitor destination restored with a mix of capital works, vital renovation of the surrounding landscape and complementary programme of coordinated activities for visitors and volunteers. The project saw the enhancement of the park's key heritage features which included improved interpretation, increased access to its many paths and upgrading its visitor facilities. The overall project has enabled the park to increase its current heritage tourism offer whilst advancing its volunteering schemes across the facility.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) • Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council • Welsh Government • Heads of the Valleys Programme • CADW

3.3 KEY PROJECTS 2013-15 - DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT:

Project	Description	Funding
River Taff Central Link	<p>The River Taff Central Link (Gyratory System) was officially launched in 2014 with the aim of the new road system to improve access to the town, reduce congestion, boost visitor numbers, and increase business prosperity in Merthyr Tydfil town centre through inward investment and employment opportunities. The project ensures a constant flow of traffic, priority lanes for buses and improved links to the Railway Station and proposed new Bus Station.</p> <div>   </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council • Welsh Government • ERDF • Heads of the Valley Programme
Parc Taf Bargoed Improvements	<p>The Taff Bargoed Hydro Scheme's core aim was to provide an income to fund the long term management and maintenance of the park. The Friends of Taff Bargoed Group had the idea of exploring the hydro-electrical potential of the site and, following an assessment of the cascade, a grant from Environment Wales was secured for a feasibility study. The £500,000 build of this project has been funded through loan finance from Welsh Government, administered by the Energy Savings Trust.</p> <div>   </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Wales • Welsh Government

Project	Description	Funding
Accommodation Improvements	The implementation of Merthyr Tydfil's initial Destination Management Plan saw the Local Authority work directly with potential tourism sector businesses. One of the areas that saw huge growth over the term of the first DMP was the accommodation sector, which saw eight new accommodation businesses establish themselves in the region, as a direct consequence of the amount of tourism development taking place across the locality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Investment Fund • Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council • Heads of the Valleys funding • Private investment • Valleys Regional Park funding
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Redevelopment	<p>In 2012, the Local Authority secured £25m to revitalise the town centre with the aim of increasing visitor numbers and business prosperity. The scheme helped transform the town with projects like the restoration of the Old Town Hall (now called The Redhouse) and the highly successful new community space at Penderyn Square, which has created a vibrant event space for the Town Centre and attracts a significant number of people to Merthyr Tydfil since opening in 2014. Another major project affiliated with the revitalisation of the Town Centre is Llys Janice Rowlands, located in the Café Quarter and subsequently opened in May 2013. This Town Centre Regeneration Programme has increased visitors to the town, created significant infrastructure development and enabled partnership working with local stakeholders.</p> <div data-bbox="412 794 1603 1011">  </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council • Welsh Government • ERDF • Heads of the Valley Programme • HLF
Treharris Town Centre Redevelopment	<p>A new pedestrian-friendly square, which is situated on the old Palace Cinema site in Treharris, has been developed as part of the Taff Bargoed Regeneration Programme. It will serve as an open space in the centre of the village and retains the key feature of the amphitheatre. The open space can be used for events and additional parking.</p> <div data-bbox="412 1190 1603 1420">  </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERDF • Welsh Government • Heads of the Valleys • Arts Council for Wales • Merthyr Tydfil CBC

4. PRIORITIES FOR MERTHYR TYDFIL 2016-18:

4.1 PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS 2016-18:

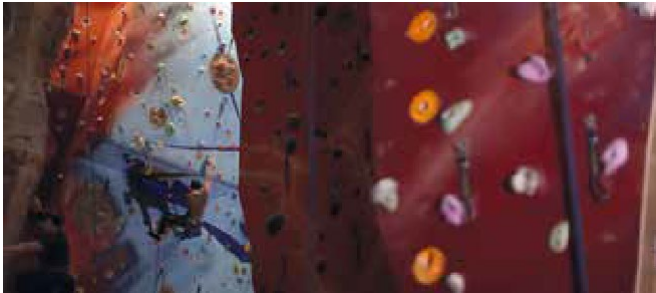
Cyfarthfa Heritage Area:

The Cyfarthfa Heritage Area is the result of three separate projects and plans to ensure the area's protection of its historical assets and its subsequent appreciation by the general public. A designated 'masterplan' has been professionally developed to inform the Local Authority regarding the future management of Cyfarthfa Castle, Park and Ironworks - which in turn will have a significant impact on the area's value to the local community and visitors whilst leading on the enhancement of the overall attraction, as well as its conservation for generations to come. Plans are in place to redevelop a large proportion of Cyfarthfa Castle to incorporate a new Museum Learning Zone, Collections Store, Research Centre and Enterprise Centre on the first floor. With regards to the park itself, consideration is being given to revamping all entrances, boundaries, footpaths and key buildings, along with developing a new forecourt at the front and undertaking landscaping projects throughout. Lastly, the Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Regeneration Trust is currently looking into the feasibility of building a full-size working replica of Richard Trevithick's Pen-y-darren Locomotive and situating it outside the Cyfarthfa Furnaces.



Rock UK Summit Centre:

The facility will go through an extensive phase of redevelopment over the next two years with plans to develop a fully catered, 100-bed multi-activity residential centre on the grounds. Also, the facility will benefit from a new bike skills course, gym, café and children's play area. Rock UK Summit Centre will also use the local area in the southern end of Merthyr Tydfil to run additional adventure activities.



Parkwood Leisure Dolygaer:

The previously Local Authority-owned Dolygaer Outdoor Activity Centre was purchased in 2015 by Parkwood Outdoors, which has an excellent track record of developing and managing leisure facilities throughout the UK. Parkwood Outdoors will look to work with MTCBC and key stakeholders with a view to redeveloping the whole infrastructure in a phased approach. Work has already taken place to add extra signage throughout the County Borough to assist visitors in finding the Activity Centre with the organisation also funding a full refurbishment of the old Caretaker's Bungalow, turning it into a 4 Star self-catering cottage. Plans are now in place to remodel the old office block, turning the facility into six large, self-catering ensuite rooms. Additionally, Parkwood Outdoors will invest heavily in a total redevelopment of its current reception area and café and look to introduce a suite of new outdoor activities in 2017.



4.2 THEMES GOING FORWARD:

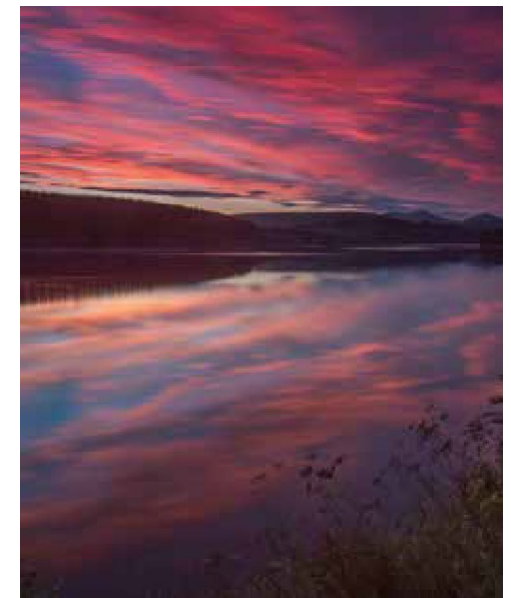
Marketing, Publicity and Perception Changing:

With technologies constantly changing and the tourism sector evolving, Local Authorities, stakeholders and subsequent businesses need to adapt their respective marketing techniques to ensure that they broadcast their key messages to an ever-expanding audience. The Local Authority has always managed its own marketing campaigns and joined-up the key messages from our tourism sector businesses, usually in a traditional Visit Merthyr Guide and Website. However, these forms of marketing tools are needing to be updated as technologies change, and therefore MTCBC has already started developing a new Visit Merthyr Website which will be mobile phone friendly (IOS and Android).

The Local Authority will also adapt to current tourism trends surrounding creative communication and plans to launch its new Destination Merthyr Tydfil video in early 2016, focussed primarily around activity tourism, with a further cultural heritage video being developed by mid-2016. Additionally, the Local Authority, along with its tourism sector businesses, needs to recognise the prominence associated with social media and the weight it can add to both the promotion of a region and the sector overall.

Over the next three years, the Destination Management Partnership will undertake a research exercise in order to scope out the demographics of all our visitors (day and overnight) with a view of gaining a better understanding of who our target market are, where they reside, what they have done in the area and their perceptions of their visit – all important factors to the sector progressing.

Another important target group that the DMP will look to focus its attention on will be local residents and those potential visitors residing in those Local Authorities situated next to Merthyr Tydfil. Local residents can make an important contribution to the sector and the Partnership recognises that by working with attractions in the area to encourage local people to visit and try their activities, it will have both a financial and societal benefit for everyone – all year round.



Activity Tourism:

The importance of activity tourism to the local economy has grown immensely over the last three years with the construction of BikePark Wales and evolution of Rock UK Summit Centre, Parkwood Outdoors Dolygaer and the substantial trail infrastructure development. The region is fast becoming a hub for activity tourism and is recognised as being one of the most desirable regions in Wales in terms of adventure tourism. The Destination Management Partnership will also focus its attention on the continued support of other activity-orientated businesses and organisations such as the County Borough's two golf clubs, two angling associations and all other sporting affiliations across the region. The DMP will look to develop the sector further, working directly with attractions and recreational organisations in a collaborative manner with a view to progressing activity tourism-based campaigns and assisting stakeholders with the pursuit of bringing nationally and internationally recognised events to the region.



Heritage & Culture:

Merthyr Tydfil, as a town - can boast a history as engaging and colourful as most major cities. The County Borough is steeped in heritage, which is a key economic driver that attracts visitors all year round and is integral to the tourism economy. The offer is strong, with attractions like Cyfarthfa Castle & Museum, Cyfarthfa Ironworks and Ynysfach Engine House, complemented by sites of historical significance such as Cefn and Ponsarn Viaducts, Cyfarthfa Leat and Tramway and Pontygwaith Bridge. Merthyr Tydfil has an array of historic walking and cycling paths and bridleways ranging from the opportunity to walk along the route of the first ever steam locomotive journey along the Trevithick Trail to the possibility of travelling the length of the iconic Taff Trail, allowing users to stop off at many of Merthyr Tydfil's historic villages. Realistically, the list is endless - and so are the opportunities to learn and explore. The Merthyr Tydfil Destination Management Plan will help stakeholders set a vision for the region, maximising further on the potential of heritage tourism and its economic impact.



Trails Development:

Merthyr Tydfil has an array of trails that run the breadth and depth of the County Borough which interlink villages and sites of interest. The Destination Management Partnership will look to adhere to Welsh Government's Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, considering improvements to our current trail infrastructure and the identification of new routes for future use. The Local Authority will continue to work with stakeholders to evolve the current maintenance plan for the region's main trails, conduct annual audits to identify problems and enhancement opportunities whilst focussing on linking each of Merthyr Tydfil's key attractions. The 'Partnership' will make considerations relating to the proposed dualling of the A465 which should see improvements to the National Cycle Network Route 46. The trails themselves are becoming an increasing resource in terms of staging events and over the course of the next three years look to add to its portfolio of the Merthyr Tydfil Half Marathon and San Domenico Run. Additionally, the Destination Management Partnership will still continue its management of the trails, proactively reacting to instances of fly tipping and pot holes.



5. SWOT ANALYSIS:

STRENGTHS:

- Great balance of rural and town centre - countryside and urban
- Attractive range of serviced and self-catering accommodation providers in the area
- Unique cultural heritage offer – an historically significant town
- Strong activity tourism component
- Well-established network of trails for walking, cycling and horse-riding across the County Borough
- Ideally situated at the crossroads of the A470 and A465
- Well-established local tourism networks and strong links with the business community
- Local Authority has excellent track record of securing EU and transnational finance
- Excellent retail offer (town centre and Cyfarthfa Retail Park)
- New marketing campaign for activity tourism and heritage (Destination Merthyr video, new website and guide)
- MTCBC has extensive relationships with many major partners and stakeholders
- Great track record of developing major growth products. i.e. Cyfarthfa Park, Caste and BikePark Wales
- The promotion of the Welsh language through dedicated mechanisms in collaboration with Canolfan Soar

WEAKNESSES:

- No Tourist Information Centre
- Signage relatively weak for some tourism sector businesses
- Restricted budget allocation for tourism by the Local Authority
- Night time offer comparatively small
- Existing problems with litter, vandalism and dereliction
- Some tourism sector business websites need updating to conform with technological advances, with others needing social media sites
- Wi-Fi coverage across the business community weak
- Lack of business advice to promote effective digital marketing
- No major high quality hotel in the area
- Few large-scale indoor attractions



OPPORTUNITIES:

- Emerging quality food / local produce offer
- Building upon current event programme
- Increasing number of overnight stays in the region linked to activity tourism
- Emergence of the new Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Programme
- Development of key arrival points (new bus station and recent train station works)
- 20% of the County Borough sits within the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- Trailing of new satellite tourist information points at key sites
- Possible new Interreg, Atlantic and VVP2 projects
- Potential to develop year-round tourism in the region
- More coordinated marketing through partnership working
- Inward investment potential with integrated infrastructure ready to be utilised
- Strategic collaboration with other South East Wales Local Authorities through the Destination Management Group
- Welsh Government recognise that tourism is a sector priority
- The profile of tourism and destination management is now a corporate priority in the Local Authority
- Key projects commencing such as the South Wales Metro System and Circuit of Wales
- The implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which include improvements to Merthyr Tydfil's social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being

THREATS:

- ICT connectively weak in some parts of the region (broadband, 3G,4G)
- Competition from other regions
- Potential for localised and national media to portray Merthyr Tydfil in a negative manner
- Tourism sector negatively impacted if Local Authority continues to cut tourism provisions
- No relevant grant streams for business support
- Competition from Cardiff in terms of stronger, traditional retail offer
- Welsh Governments change from grant to investment support (loan orientated)



6. ACTION PLAN:

No.	Key Action:
1.	Promotion of the Destination:
1.1	Work collaboratively with stakeholders to support destination specific marketing campaigns
1.2	Research and use emerging technologies that enhance current marketing mechanisms to promote Merthyr Tydfil to a wide audience
1.3	Explore the development of 'Tourist Information Points' across the County Borough
2.	Activity Tourism Development:
2.1	Broaden the development of activity tourism attractions and outdoor providers to enhance the region's offer
2.2	Explore new opportunities to develop new and emerging activity products
2.3	Work collaboratively with tourism sector businesses to develop specific activity tourism packages for visitors and local residents
2.4	Exploration of potential of hosting large-scale events in the region
2.5	Ensure the Rights of Way, NCN, tracks and trails are managed effectively
3.	Cultural Heritage Tourism Development:
3.1	Continue to support the preservation, maintenance and development of key heritage sites across the County Borough
3.2	Provide a support mechanism for the Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Forum and associated groups
3.3	Identification of all heritage assets across the County Borough via a dedicated mapping exercise
3.4	Develop a heritage-specific video for Merthyr Tydfil promoting the area's rich history and culture
3.5	Strategic support of the development of the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area
3.6	Support the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards and subsequent promotion of bilingual information at key attractions and heritage / arrival points
4.	Development of Merthyr Tydfil's Business Infrastructure:
4.1	Promote the strengths of the region in terms of encouraging inward investment into the area
4.2	Encourage the promotion of entrepreneurship and growth opportunities amongst new and existing local businesses
4.3	Further develop the existing business community with appropriate grant funding and business advice
4.4	Explore further opportunities for the development of niche businesses in the area



No.	Key Action:
4.5	Pursue EU funding opportunities to assist with developing Merthyr Tydfil's business infrastructure
4.6	Encourage the principles of entrepreneurship across all educational facilities
4.7	Support the reuse of building space to provide opportunities for economic activity
4.8	Promote the roll-out of the new Broadband infrastructure within the business community
5.	Improvements to the Public Realm:
5.1	Review the current signage situation through an annual signage audit
5.2	Continue to support the concept of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to enhance key business areas
5.3	Contribute to the redevelopment of interpretation at all regional visitor arrival points
5.4	Actively pursue 'Purple Flag' accreditation for the town centre
6.	Tackling Perceptions:
6.1	Develop a concise communication protocol with all press and marketing materials to improve coverage of Merthyr Tydfil
6.2	Work with the local residents in terms of supporting community tourism and promotion of the region to potential visitors to the area
7.	Broaden the Quality of Accommodation Businesses:
7.1	Undertake an annual diagnostic review process with the accommodation sector to assess need and potential improvements of businesses
7.2	Strategically support all accommodation providers with improving their Visit Wales grading and respective tourism offer
7.3	Explore potential diversification of identified accommodation businesses
7.4	Investigate the potential of developing a high quality large hotel in the County Borough
8.	Events:
8.1	Further exploration of staging major events in Merthyr Tydfil
8.2	Continue to support a coordinated approach to delivering a sustainable events programme with key stakeholders
9.	Market Segmentation:
9.1	Further enhance the principles of market segmentation and how it can be used better understand potential markets
9.2	Explore key data from the Visit Merthyr Website with a view of obtaining data relating to site visits and demographics



No.	Key Action:
10.	Research:
10.1	Make better use of primary mechanisms for data capture by reinstating the diagnostic review process and analysis of STEAM figures
11.	Training & Volunteering:
11.1	Promote the continued support of all training opportunities for businesses and residents with key stakeholders
11.2	Further support the development and promotion of regional volunteering schemes focussed around capacity building
11.3	Provide recruitment solutions based on the need from potential inward investors
12.	Strategic Partnership Working:
12.1	Reinvigorate the Destination Management Partnership to ensure projects, actions and priorities are delivered
12.2	Work with regional strategic partners to identify delivery links and potential funding streams which add value and enhance visitors' experience
12.3	Support all thematic and area-specific groups with a view of further developing the destination's attractiveness of promotion opportunities
13.	Food & Drink:
13.1	Promote the use of localised produce at key food retailers across the County Borough
13.2	Support the development of farmers' markets and food-related events in the area
13.3	Encourage businesses and stakeholders to adopt Fair Trade products
13.4	Explore the potential of developing the night time economy in the town centre



