

Visit Kent

Kent Sustainable Tourism Action Plan

2023 - 2030

AN ACTION PLAN TO POSITIVELY IMPACT KENT'S COMMUNITY, CLIMATE AND
NATURE - MAY 2023

#PactsForImpact



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kent has extraordinary natural, cultural, and historic heritage with vibrant and diverse communities and a great food and drink offer. These assets underpin our amazing visitor economy. The climate and biodiversity emergencies and a global pandemic have created an urgent need to act to protect and enhance Kent's vital tourism assets.

Our Kent Sustainable Tourism Action Plan brings together businesses, the community and visitors -



*“...TO POSITIVELY IMPACT COMMUNITY,
CLIMATE AND NATURE.”*

The Plan outlines key steps that Visit Kent, alongside local tourism businesses and other key partners can take between now and 2030, to play our part in an efficient and just transition towards Net Zero and a nature positive future.

The detailed plan sets out 14 different action areas but we have identified three key priority actions for Kent's visitor economy.



PRIORITY ACTIONS



FOOD FOR GOOD



Reduce food's climate and nature impact by actively increasing local, seasonal, organic and plant-based options on menus and increasing demand by celebrating Kentish produce.



GO NATURE POSITIVE



Support nature positive tourism initiatives that conserve, preserve or restore landscapes, habitats and wildlife. Pilot an innovative nature pay back scheme encouraging visitors to 'pay it back' to Kent's nature and wildlife.



GO LOCO2



Shift visitors to low carbon and active travel when travelling to and around the destination by making it easier for visitors to find information and to choose these options.

KEY ACTIVITY

Progress against the detailed actions will be tracked through an ongoing monitoring programme using **7** different data sources to capture **16** different social, environmental and economic impact indicators.

B2B Hub

Tourism businesses will be supported to take positive action through a new hub of impact resources.

Impact Heroes

We will celebrate our Impact Heroes by amplifying creative and innovative sustainability initiatives in the county to inspire businesses and visitors alike.

Pact for Impact

Key sustainability leaders from the Kent tourism industry, public sector and nature conservation organisations will ensure close collaboration on delivering the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan through the Act for Impact Tourism Working Group. As a group we commit to act now and in the coming years before 2030 with our Pact for Impact.

“TOGETHER WE COMMIT TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR TOURISM IN KENT, ONE BUILT ON SHARED, INTERNATIONAL GOALS TO RECOVER AND ENHANCE THE ECONOMY, THE WELLBEING OF OUR COMMUNITIES, AND OUR IRREPLACEABLE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.”



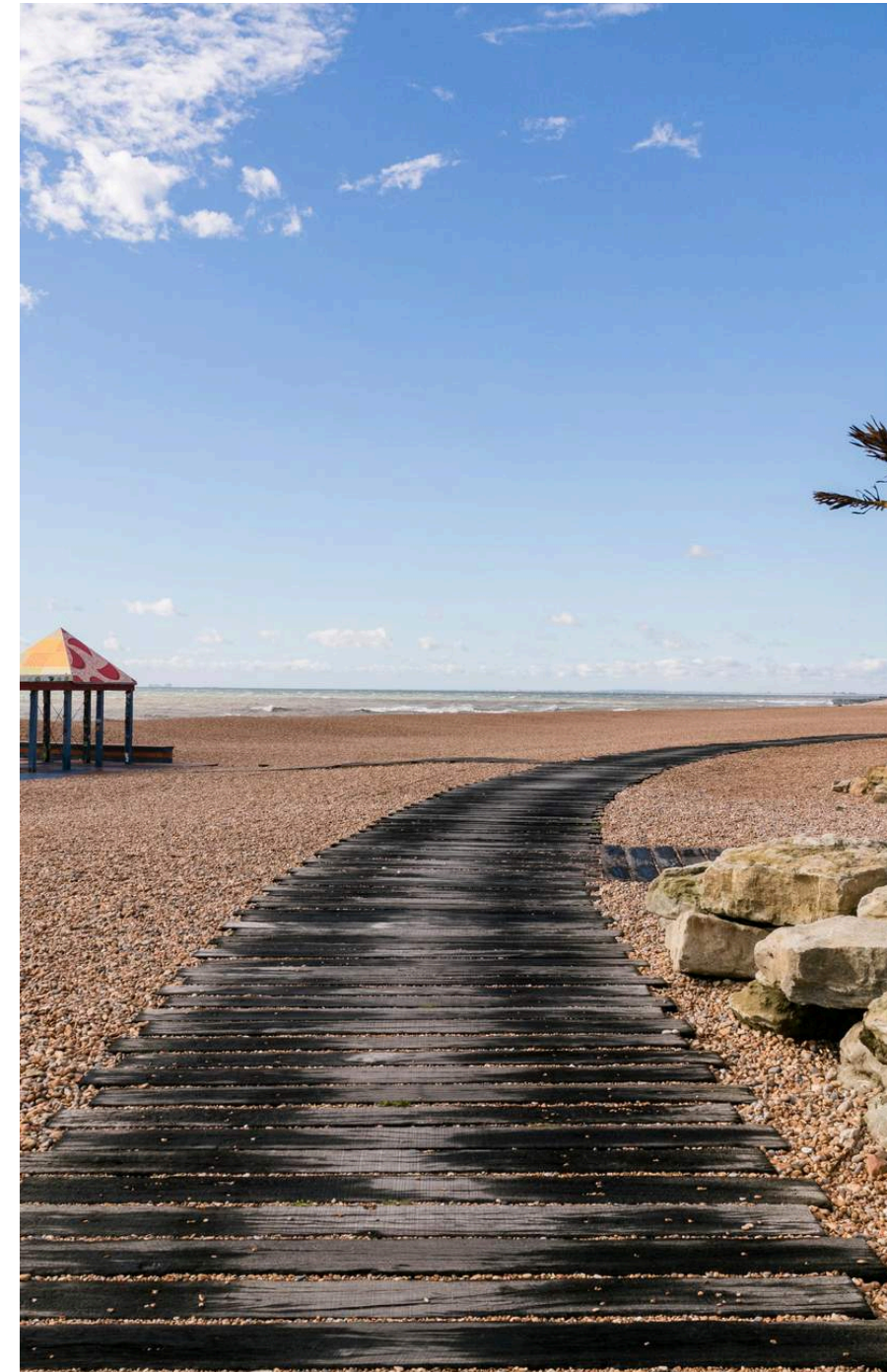
INTRODUCTION

Tourism has the power to create positive impacts and also has the potential to impact negatively if not managed thoughtfully and purposefully. Sustainable or responsible tourism is about planning tourism with purpose; so that it does more good and a lot less harm. Ultimately, this approach to tourism makes for a more enjoyable experience for visitors too.

For Visit Kent and the local tourism industry there are three crucial ‘life support systems’ upon which the industry relies: community, nature and climate. When these life support systems thrive, local tourism and visitors benefit. However, the relationship is two-way. The tourism industry has an impact on communities, nature and climate. We have a duty to manage it responsibly and protect the beautiful Kent landscape.

Society, governments and businesses must move rapidly now towards a Net Zero and nature positive future. Our Sustainable Tourism Action Plan lays out how the tourism industry in Kent can play its part and help protect and enhance community, climate and nature for the long-term value - of not only the local tourism industry - but also of the planet.

This plan is for Visit Kent and any business or organisation that is based, or operates in Kent, involved in tourism: local authorities, nature conservation organisations, hotels, B&Bs, tour and activity operators, transport providers, tour guides, holiday parks, campsites, attractions, experiences, museums, cultural organisations, food and drink outlets/producers such as (pubs, cafes, restaurants, farms) and retailers.

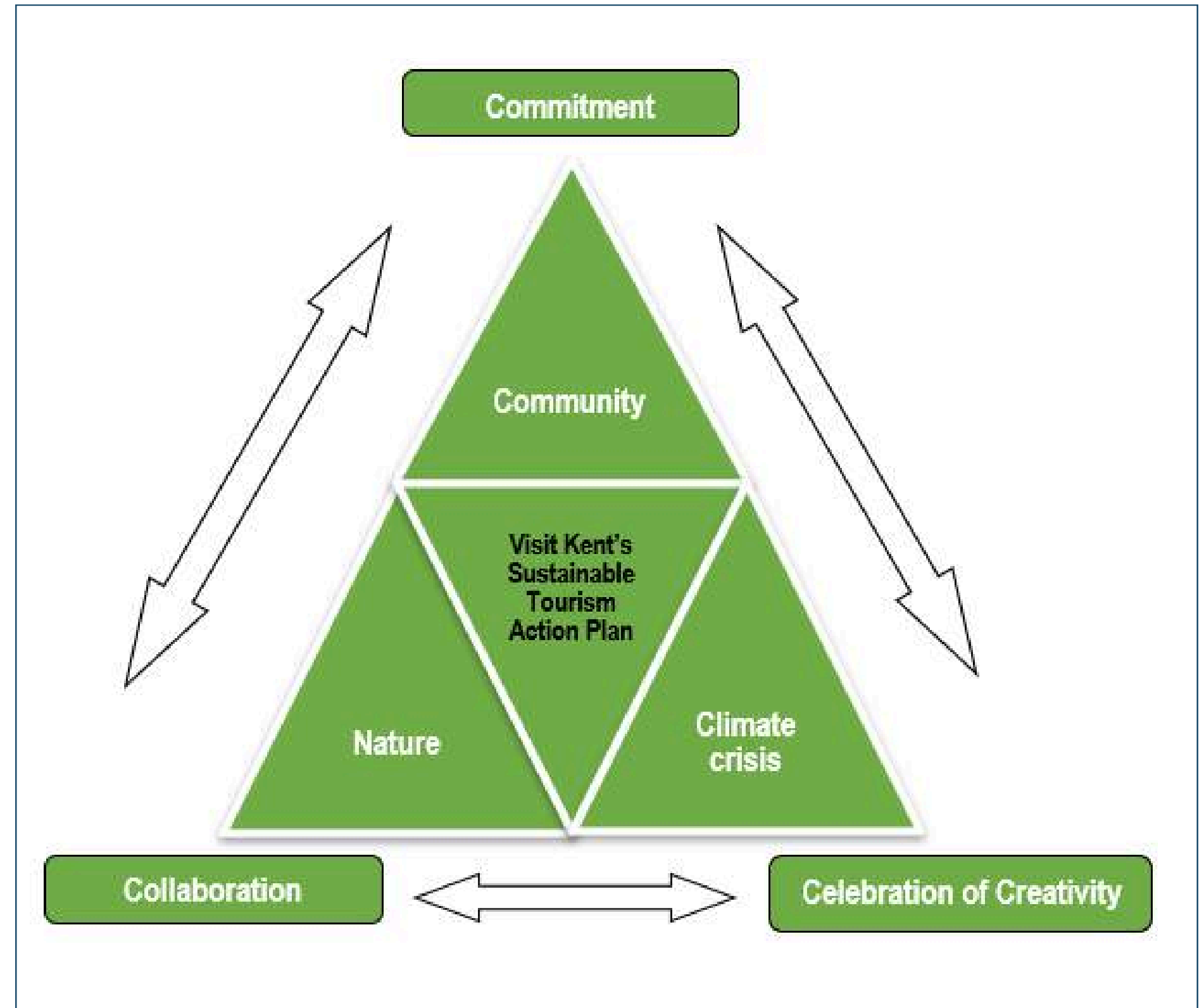


IMPACT PRIORITIES

The priority themes of community, nature and climate, form the strategic back bone - the corner posts of Kent's Sustainable Tourism Action Plan.

In a 2022 report by Booking.com, 71% of travellers confirmed that sustainable travel is important to them, as more and more visitors choose travel providers and destinations that are able to offer lower carbon, nature friendly experiences - run by those businesses that are 'purpose-led' in their approach.

This sentiment was also supported by trends seen in the Kent Perception Study. Upholding our responsibilities to communities, nature and climate is not only essential for our future, but it also makes good business sense too.



1



COMMUNITY

Kent's community of residents not only staff the local tourism industry - providing visitors with the very best service - but they also help to maintain and conserve the cultures, stories, traditions and way of life that are distinctive to the area. They are fundamental in helping to create the authentic 'sense of place' that makes Kent such a special place to live in and visit.

Tourism contributes £2.6bn to the Kent visitor economy, generating stable, year-round job opportunities for local people and helping to preserve the cultural heritage of Kent.

The tourism industry in Kent must be inclusive, placing emphasis on equality and ensuring diversity in employment, as well as for career progression and training opportunities too. Kent must be welcoming and inclusive to visitors from all backgrounds as well as ensuring it is accessible for those with additional requirements, including hidden disabilities.

Working with Kent's local residents and communities to ensure tourism is developed in partnership with local voices is vital, as we know that tourism - when done well - has a positive impact on the wellbeing of local residents. Local people are valuable 'visitors' too, regularly taking day trips, as well as acting as hosts to friends and relatives.

Kent's community includes innovative sustainability and social impact leaders and business owners, who are all helping to drive forwards the sustainability agenda. These innovators - our Impact Heroes - should be celebrated and will help inspire others.

2



NATURE

We know we currently face a biodiversity crisis, with approximately one million plant and animal species facing extinction. We know that biodiversity draws in carbon and helps in the fight against the climate crisis too.

At the UN Biodiversity Conference COP15 last year an agreement was reached to preserve a third of the planet's lands, coastal areas and oceans by 2030 and tourism has an important role to play. It is often the nature - whether landscape, seascape or wildlife that visitors come to Kent to see (47% of visitors to Kent say it is one of the main reasons they visited). The benefits of nature to our health and wellbeing have been well documented.

Kent is a rural county with a thriving agricultural and horticultural sector. The Kent Downs AONB makes up almost a quarter of the region. Kent is one of the most wildlife-rich counties in the UK and has 116 sites of national/international importance for conservation. The impact of nature as a positive 'pull' force for visitors is also set to increase as the Kent Downs AONB aspires to achieve UNESCO Global Geopark status in the future.

Protecting and regenerating Kent's nature has never been more crucial. Educating visitors about accessing the landscape in a mindful way, and raising awareness of the value of nature, will be key. Our action plan must work to promote more nature positive tourism and to support Kent's Biodiversity Strategy. Visit Kent will therefore be piloting a nature pay back scheme as a key focus of its action plan. Such a scheme would provide tourists and tourism businesses with a tangible way to give back to nature in the region. Working collaboratively with potential nature-based beneficiaries, monies would be ring fenced for nature recovery and regeneration programmes.

3



CLIMATE CRISIS

The impacts of the climate crisis can already be felt by communities around the world, and Kent is no exception. In fact, Kent has the highest risk of local flooding of all local authorities in England. Floods, soil erosion, coastal erosion, droughts and hot weather, are all becoming more and more common, as temperatures and sea levels increase.

Nations, communities, businesses, organisations and individuals are now taking action to reduce carbon emissions in order to limit global temperature rises. To do this, we must half emissions by 2030 and reach Net Zero by 2050 or before. We must address and reduce Kent's tourism emissions as much as possible through our action plan and support Kent County Council's [Environment Strategy](#) and [Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy](#).

Transport will be vital. Travellers are becoming more aware of aviation's impacts and the need for lower carbon forms of transport. Visit Kent is actively promoting rail and bus travel to both the UK staycation market and key inbound target markets and priorities must be considered in this context. Alternative forms of land-based transport can be promoted to inbound visitors where possible – particularly as part of the last-mile solution. Where no viable alternatives exist, it is important to encourage visitors to stay for longer, to maximise the benefits for local communities and nature.

How we use the planet's resources will be crucial. Food is often less considered as a climate impact of our holidays. Reducing food waste (we throw away a third of food) and focussing on local, seasonal produce means we can make Food for Good a central focus of our action plan.

OUR APPROACH TO IMPACT

With this Plan, Visit Kent aims to bring businesses, the community and visitors together around their potential for mutually positive impacts. To do this, we'll focus on three fundamental approaches which will help fuel an ongoing cycle of positive action within the local tourism industry:

- COMMITMENT
- COLLABORATION
- CELEBRATION OF CREATIVITY

COMMITMENT

The first commitment to act comes in the form of this Sustainable Tourism Action Plan. We plan to go further with our Pact for Impact. Strategic organisations who will lead on the delivery of the action plan will come together to sign-up to the Pact, agreeing to act now and in the coming years before 2030 in order:

“...TO POSITIVELY IMPACT COMMUNITY, CLIMATE AND NATURE. TOGETHER WE COMMIT TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR TOURISM IN KENT, ONE BUILT ON SHARED, INTERNATIONAL GOALS TO RECOVER AND ENHANCE THE ECONOMY, THE WELLBEING OF OUR COMMUNITIES, AND OUR IRREPLACEABLE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT”

All tourism organisations in Kent can also take positive action and use the matrix of actions to help guide them, as well as the dedicated written resources for tourism businesses on the [Impact Resources](#) section of the Visit Kent Business website.



OUR APPROACH TO IMPACT

COLLABORATION

Collective action and collaboration are crucial for a sustainable tourism industry in Kent to thrive. Visit Kent's new working group - The Act for Impact Tourism Working Group - consists of key sustainability stakeholders in the Kent area, including those who have fed into this plan. As part of this working group, we will be piloting a new scheme – funded by tourism - that specifically benefits and gives back to nature in Kent.

Working collaboratively with local, nature conservation and restoration organisations to allocate funds, Visit Kent plans to work with 5-10 local tourism partners on a pilot nature pay back scheme: Back to Nature. Overnight visitors can 'opt in' to 'pay it back' to Kent's nature and wildlife. Funds would be distributed as agreed by the working group.

CELEBRATION OF CREATIVITY

There is already a plethora of fantastic, creative and innovative sustainability initiatives across the county, including many provided from the EXPERIENCE project.

Visit Kent plans to amplify these 'Impact Heroes' – to celebrate and show their work as an example and inspiration to others and share sustainability messaging with visitors too.



OUR APPROACH TO IMPACT

ACT FOR IMPACT WORKING GROUP

The Act for Impact Tourism Working Group consists of key sustainability leaders from the Kent tourism industry, public sector and nature conservation organisations. Medway Council, District and Borough Councils feed in through the Kent Climate Change Officer Group. The purpose of the working group is to ensure close collaboration on delivering the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan. As a group, Visit Kent and the below organisations have committed to act now and in the coming years before 2030.



**KENT DOWNS
NATIONAL
LANDSCAPE**

[Website](#)



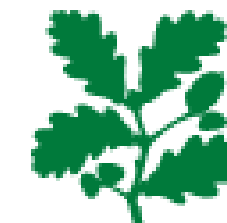
**PRODUCED IN
KENT**

[Website](#)



**KENT WILDLIFE
TRUST**

[Website](#)



**NATIONAL
TRUST**

[Website](#)



**KENT COUNTY
COUNCIL**

[Website](#)

southeastern

SOUTHEASTERN

[Website](#)



ARRIVA

[Website](#)



STAGECOACH

[Website](#)

Contact Us

If you have any questions about our Sustainable Tourism Action Plan or would like to get involved please email -

enquires@visitkent.co.uk

Or visit the Visit Kent B2B website or social channels below.



PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KRISSY ROE - SOW GOOD CONSULTING




VISIT KENT
BUSINESS
GARDEN of ENGLAND

#PactsForImpact


IMPACTS AND ACTIONS MATRIX


Our Sustainable Tourism Action Plan outlines key steps that Visit Kent, alongside local tourism businesses and other key partners, can take between now and 2030 to help with an efficient and just transition towards Net Zero and a nature positive future.

THEME	INDICATORS	ACTIONS	TARGETS	DATE	COLLABORATORS
CLIMATE					
TRANSPORT GO LOCO2 	1. Lower carbon transport – arrival method	<p>i. Encourage more domestic visitors to arrive by train instead of car</p> <p>Visit Kent to continue to lobby for more integrated ticketing and value-for-money train services.</p> <p>Visit Kent to continue to work with train companies to promote greater uptake of train travel e.g. selected offers for visitors, dedicated promotions, Southeastern’s carbon calculator etc.</p> <p>Visit Kent to encourage arrival visitors to swap the car for train by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting train company offers via social media, as well as those local businesses offering specific train travel incentives - Promoting the KentConnected app and incorporating visitor destinations as points of interest - Sharing content on the importance of lower carbon travel (via website and via social media) as well as places/events visitors can reach by train <p>Local tourism businesses to encourage / incentivise visitors to arrive by train e.g. providing details of train travel routes, timings and information on their website; offer station pick up services; offer discount on attraction entry for those showing valid public transport receipt etc.</p> <p>ii. Encourage more arrivals by bus</p> <p>Visit Kent to continue to work with key bus operators to promote bus travel, particularly to residents travelling from within Kent.</p> <p>Local tourism businesses to encourage / incentivise visitors to arrive by bus e.g. website information with bus stops and bus routes, discounts on entry tickets for those showing valid public transport receipt etc.</p>	<p>Increase number of visitors arriving by train METRIC: Visit Kent’s annual visitor study and five-yearly perception study. Baseline: 16% of domestic visitors arriving via train based on their previous visit – Visit Kent Annual Visitor Study 2023.</p> <p>Increase number of visitors arriving by bus METRIC: Visit Kent’s annual visitor study and five-yearly perception study. Baseline: 3% of domestic visitors arriving via bus based on their previous visit – Visit Kent Annual Visitor Study 2023.</p>	<p>2027</p> <p>2027</p>	<p>Visit Kent, local authorities, Southeastern, HS1, tourism businesses, Kent Connected, visitors</p> <p>Visit Kent, Stagecoach, Arriva, tourism businesses, Kent Connected, residents as visitors</p> <p>Visit Kent, VisitBritain, Eurostar, Eurotunnel, Eurolines, ferry operators, Port</p>

		<p>iii. Encourage inbound visitors to reduce flights Target the markets that can reach Kent overland rather than flying. Encourage inbound visitors to travel overland. Encourage those that do fly to stay for longer to maximise community and nature benefits.</p> <p>iv. Encourage the use of electric cars by offering electric car charging points and information about electric car hire Tourism businesses in Kent to install electric car charging points and where not possible, to offer information about nearest charging points for visitors as well as where to hire electric cars locally.</p> <p>Visit Kent to provide online resources to help tourism businesses and signpost to available funding.</p>	<p>Monitor arrival method of inbound visits via IPS data (dependant on methodology and availability of county-level data). Monitor average length of stay via IPS where possible or through Economic Impact of Tourism report. METRIC: Kent Economic Impact Cambridge Model Study. Baseline: Inbound visitors' average length of stay 5.1 nights - Kent Economic Impact Cambridge Model Study based on 2022 data</p> <p>Increase the number of electric charging points at tourism businesses where on-site parking is available and monitor METRIC: Visit Kent's annual business survey. Baseline: 21% of businesses offer electric vehicle charging (EV) points where on-site parking is available - 2023</p> <p>All to offer by 2030.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year on year</p> <p>2030</p>	<p>of Dover, UKInbound, tour operators</p> <p>Visit Kent, local authorities, accommodation providers</p>
	<p>2. Lower carbon transport – whilst in Kent</p>	<p>i. Encourage bikes and e-bike use Local tourism businesses to have bikes and/or e-bikes available for visitors either free or to hire as well as information on cycle routes.</p> <p>Visit Kent and Kent's tourism industry to encourage collaborations with local bike / e-bike hire companies.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of tourism businesses offering bikes for visitors</p> <p>Increase in the number of businesses in Kent accredited by Cycling</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Visit Kent, local authorities, Explore Kent, Kent Downs AONB, tourism businesses, bike hire companies, Cycling UK, Brompton bikes</p>

		<p>Where possible, tourism-related businesses to ensure safe 'bike parking' facilities for those bringing their own bikes, as well as information on business's website about how to arrive by bike.</p> <p>Local tourism businesses to work towards becoming a Cycle Friendly Place via Cycling UK's accreditation scheme.</p> <p>ii. Encourage more active travel activities for visitors and residents</p> <p>Walking: Visit Kent to increase promotion of walking routes and work with tourism businesses to encourage them to do the same e.g. Explore Kent walking section, Kent Downs website, Kent Connected and other potential new digital platforms and apps.</p> <p>Cycling: Visit Kent to increase promotion of bike and e-bike tours, as well as cycle routes and encourage tourism businesses to do the same.</p> <p>Visit Kent to encourage investment in walking and cycling infrastructure, by feeding into consultations and providing relevant data.</p> <p>iii. Encourage bus use</p> <p>Visit Kent and tourism businesses to encourage visitors to use local buses via more online content and ticket offers e.g. shuttle buses to local attractions, bus operator apps, Kent Connected website.</p> <p>Work with bus operators, tourism businesses and rail operators to identify opportunities and build business cases to adapt timetables or routes to provide a more integrated service which meet the needs of visitors.</p>	<p>UK. METRIC: Visit Kent's annual business survey. BASELINE: 7% of businesses stated they are part of the Cyclists Welcome accreditation scheme & 45% of businesses offer bike friendly services – 2023.</p> <p>Increase in promotion of cycling and walking routes and tours METRIC: Visit Kent's online data. Baseline: 9,521 page views for active travel features in 2023/2024.</p> <p>Increase in visitors walking and cycling METRIC: Visit Kent's Annual visitor survey. Baseline: 11% of domestic visitors walking/cycling on their previous visit – 2023.</p> <p>Increase in visitors using buses during their stay METRIC: Visit Kent's perceptions study. Baseline: 10% of domestic visitors travelling via bus on their previous visit – 2022.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year on year</p> <p>2027</p>	<p>Visit Kent, local authorities, Kent Downs AONB, Explore Kent, tourism businesses, visitors</p> <p>Stagecoach, Arriva, Visit Kent, local authorities, Kent Connected, local bus companies, tourism businesses, KCC Active Travel team</p>
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<p>ENERGY USE</p> <p>MAKE THE SWITCH</p> 	<p>3. Reduce energy use in tourism-related businesses, as well among visitors</p>	<p>i. Encourage all tourism related businesses in Kent to measure and set energy reduction targets All tourism partners in Kent, including Visit Kent, to set individual energy reduction targets and be working to reduce energy consumption and save money.</p> <p>Visit Kent to publish online resources, including support and potential funding signposting for local businesses to help them monitor, set targets and reduce energy use.</p> <p>Visit Kent to feature inspiring businesses in its online Impact Heroes section.</p> <p>ii. Encouragement of tourism businesses to switch to green energy tariffs Visit Kent to publish online resources to help businesses. Visit Kent to also work with its own landlord to shift to green energy provider.</p> <p>iii. Visit Kent offices to use a business carbon calculator to help measure their carbon footprint.</p>	<p>Tourism businesses and Visit Kent, to publish commitment to energy reduction on their websites. METRIC: Visit Kent's annual business survey. Baseline: 31% of businesses have a commitment to energy reduction published on their website – 2023.</p> <p>Publish content. METRIC: Visit Kent's online data.</p> <p>Publish content. METRIC: Visit Kent's online data.</p> <p>Increase number of tourism businesses on green energy tariffs METRIC: Visit Kent's annual business survey. Baseline: 14% of businesses stated they are currently on a green energy tariff – 2023.</p> <p>Use calculator to measure and report annual reductions.</p>	<p>2025 Year on year</p> <p>By end of 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2030</p> <p>By end of 2023</p>	<p>Visit Kent, tourism businesses, local authorities</p> <p>Visit Kent</p> <p>Visit Kent</p> <p>Visit Kent, tourism businesses, local authorities</p> <p>Visit Kent</p>
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<p>FOOD</p> <p>FOOD FOR GOOD</p> 	<p>4. Lower carbon foods e.g. plant based, non-meat, organic AND seasonal/local to reduce food miles</p>	<p>i. Tourism related businesses to actively increase local, seasonal, organic and plant-based options on menus Visit Kent to work closely with Produced in Kent to encourage tourism businesses (both accommodations and food outlets) to use local food and drink produce.</p> <p>Visit Kent, Produced in Kent and local tourism industry to promote cafes / restaurants / pubs / accommodations / farm kitchens and shops working hard to offer local, seasonal as well as more plant-based, vegan, nature-friendly menus.</p> <p>Visit Kent to feature inspiring tourism businesses innovating around menus, food/drink as well as culinary tours/experiences, in its online Impact Heroes section.</p> <p>Kent tourism industry to promote/support the Taste of Kent fair in June 2023, building connections with local producers/food and restaurant industry/community so as to 'localise' menus and food offerings.</p> <p>Visit Kent, Produced in Kent and local tourism industry to encourage visitors to attend local food and drink festivals as well as markets in Kent throughout the year.</p>	<p>Visit Kent to measure local businesses actively increasing local and plant-based food options, METRIC: Visit Kent's annual business survey. Baseline: 59% actively working to increase the use of local or seasonal produce & 41% organic or plant-based – 2023.</p> <p>Increased promotion of local, plant-based producers/suppliers METRIC: Visit Kent's online data. Baseline: 27,653 page views for local produce features for 2023/2024.</p> <p>Publish content. METRIC: Visit Kent's online data.</p> <p>Entries and press coverage reach. METRIC: The number of award entries and press coverage reach. Baseline: 255 entries to the Taste of Kent Awards and a 5.46 million press coverage reach – 2023.</p> <p>Promotion of food and drink events. METRIC: Visit Kent's Online data. Baseline: 9,007 page views for features in 2023/2024.</p>	<p>2025</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By end of 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Visit Kent, local authorities, Produced in Kent, tourism businesses, food businesses, visitors</p> <p>Visit Kent, Produced in Kent, tourism businesses</p> <p>Visit Kent</p> <p>Visit Kent, Produced in Kent, tourism businesses</p> <p>Visit Kent, Produced in Kent, local tourism businesses</p>
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		<p>ii. Visit Kent to continue to monitor and ensure recognition among visitors of Kent's quality food and drink offering</p>	<p>Quality of Kent's food and drink to remain in Top 5 (rated excellent or very good) attributes for visitors. METRIC: Visit Kent's perceptions study. Baseline: Rated joint 5th place among domestic visitors– Visit Kent Perception Study 2022.</p>	2027	Visit Kent
			<p>Increase in belief that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The quality of Kent's food and drink offering is 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent' - Sampling the local food and drink is a reason to visit the area. <p>METRIC: Visit Kent's perceptions study. Baseline: Quality of food & drink offering – 84%, sampling local food & drink – 19% – Visit Kent Domestic Perception Study 2022.</p>	2027	Visit Kent
		<p>iii. Visit Kent to promote and support the diverse and exciting local food and drink tourism experiences that are on offer from local businesses, as well as food and drink events, on its website</p>	<p>Increase in online reach and engagement for food and drink content on the Visit Kent website. METRIC: Visit Kent's online data.</p>	Year on year	Visit Kent
WASTE	5. Reduce waste in accommodations and other tourism-	<p>Encourage all tourism businesses in Kent to actively reduce waste year on year (preventing, reusing and recycling) All tourism partners in Kent, including Visit Kent, to commit to reducing waste in their operations and seek out suppliers with similar objectives. Visit Kent to help businesses by publishing online resources and guidance on waste management and publish inspiring Impact Heroes –</p>	<p>Tourism businesses, including Visit Kent, to publish their commitment to waste reduction on their websites. METRIC: Visit Kent's</p>	2025 Year on year	Visit Kent, local authorities, tourism businesses, visitors


SAY 'NO' TO WASTE





<p>related businesses as well as from visitors</p>	<p>examples of businesses successfully reducing waste and saving money.</p> <p>Visit Kent to share tips on waste reduction as well as local refill stations with visitors.</p>	<p>annual business survey. Baseline: 35% of businesses have their commitment to waste reduction published on their website - 2023</p> <p>Publish content METRIC: Visit Kent's online data.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Visit Kent, local authorities</p>
<p>6. Reduce food waste in accommodations and other tourism-related businesses as well as from visitors</p>	<p>Tourism businesses in Kent to take steps to actively reduce food waste Tourism businesses, including Visit Kent offices and events, to set individual targets for food waste reduction, share these online and take action to reduce.</p> <p>Visit Kent to share online resources around food waste reduction with tourism businesses.</p> <p>Visit Kent to celebrate Impact Heroes who are reducing food waste and using food waste innovatively, to create a circular economy and saving money.</p> <p>Encouragement of 'tourist households' e.g. self-catering or camping visitors, to reduce their 'food print': reuse, take left over produce home and only 'buy what they'll eat'.</p> <p>Increase the number of businesses in Kent using food distribution programs to redistribute surplus food.</p>	<p>Tourism businesses to actively reduce food waste annually. METRIC: Visit Kent's annual business survey. Baseline: 55% of businesses currently have in place initiatives to encourage waste reduction - 2023</p> <p>Publish content METRIC: Visit Kent's online data.</p> <p>Publish content METRIC: Visit Kent's online data.</p> <p>Increased marketing messages and signage</p> <p>Increase the number of businesses in Kent using food distribution programs METRIC: Visit Kent's annual business survey. Baseline: 14% of businesses currently using food distribution programmes – 2023.</p>	<p>Monitor annual reduction 2023-30</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2030</p> <p>Year on year</p>	<p>Visit Kent, Produced in Kent, WRAP, local authorities, tourism businesses, visitors</p> <p>Visit Kent</p> <p>Visit Kent</p> <p>Visit Kent, visitor accommodation</p> <p>Produced in Kent, Visit Kent, local tourism businesses</p> <p>Visit Kent, tourism and hospitality businesses, Too Good to Go</p>

NATURE

<p>NATURE POSITIVE INITIATIVES</p> <p>GO NATURE POSITIVE</p> 	<p>7. More nature positive tourism initiatives – those that conserve, preserve or restore landscapes, habitats and wildlife</p>	<p>i. BACK TO NATURE: a nature pay-back scheme for visitors Visit Kent to work with 5-10 local tourism partners on a pilot nature pay-back scheme whereby key nature-regenerative schemes (e.g. Kent Downs AONB, Kent Wildlife Trust etc.) can benefit from contributions from overnight visitors who voluntarily ‘opt in’ to ‘pay it back’ to Kent’s nature and wildlife as agreed by the working group.</p> <p>ii. Encouraging nature positive initiatives among tourism businesses Tourism businesses to work to encourage biodiversity and nature positive initiatives within their available patch of green space (however big or small). Areas to consider: attracting bees and other pollinators, encouraging birdlife and wildlife, tree planting, wild meadows and ‘no mow’ areas, pond installations and other activities highlighted in Kent’s Biodiversity Strategy</p> <p>Signpost to tips and support offered by local nature conservation and regeneration organisations. Visit Kent to celebrate on social media, those businesses showing innovation via Impact Heroes section.</p> <p>iii. Promote local nature-positive tourism Visit Kent and all tourism businesses to promote, support and encourage visitors to enjoy Kent Downs AONB, woodlands and reserves responsibly as well as nature-friendly attractions and experiences (with good animal welfare policies) on offer in the region via marketing channels, including website.</p>	<p>Establish a working group to agree structure of the scheme</p> <p>Run a pilot programme</p> <p>Expansion</p> <p>For all tourism businesses to encourage nature wherever possible in their green spaces. METRIC: Visit Kent’s annual business survey. Baseline: 69% of businesses encourage nature positive initiatives and use of green spaces where possible - 2023.</p> <p>Maintain or increase number of visitors who would definitely consider nature based immersive experiences. METRIC: Visit Kent’s perception study.</p> <p>Maintain or increase number of residents engaging with green/outdoor spaces when working from home. METRIC: Visit Kent’s annual residents survey Baseline: 73% - Kent Residents survey Wave 6.</p>	<p>2023</p> <p>2024-25</p> <p>2025-30</p> <p>All to be taking action by 2030</p> <p>2027</p> <p>2023 onwards</p>	<p>Visit Kent, pilot travel partners, local nature conservation organisations, Kent County Council</p> <p>Tourism businesses, Visit Kent, Kent Wildlife Trust, Kent Downs AONB, local authorities</p> <p>Visit Kent, nature conservation organisations, Tourism businesses, Explore Kent, Kent Downs AONB, Forestry Commission, Kent Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Forestry Commission</p> <p>Tourism businesses, Visit Kent</p>
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		<p>iv. Promote local nature-based visitor volunteering schemes Visit Kent and tourism businesses to share information with visitors, residents, local businesses and staff about nature and wildlife volunteering opportunities as well as 'citizen science' programmes (for them to take part in during holidays for visitors or as part of corporate volunteering days for staff).</p> <p>Visit Kent to continue its staff volunteering days for staff to take part in a local, nature-based volunteering activity in lieu of work.</p>	<p>Promotion of nature-based volunteering opportunities METRIC: Visit Kent's online data. Baseline: 2,828 page views based on nature positive and nature-based volunteering features from 2023/2024.</p> <p>Three per year</p>	Annual	Visit Kent
<p>OVER CROWDING AVOID OVER TOURISM</p> 	<p>8. Managing visitor dispersal to reduce negative effects on nature</p>	<p>Visit Kent to continue to adopt marketing approaches that disperse visitors and avoid overcrowding. Continue to monitor visitor numbers / tourism's impact on nature, landscapes and communities, by collaborating with key partners.</p> <p>Visit Kent to continue to encourage visitors throughout the seasons and to all sites as well as the main, popular locations through curated and inspirational content.</p> <p>Visit Kent and participating local authorities to promote Beach Check UK app to help visitors avoid the busy beaches.</p> <p>Visit Kent to support and adopt the Kent Downs AONB management plan including their vision for 2041: <i>"In 2041... the qualities and distinctive features of the Kent Downs AONB, the dramatic south-facing scarp, far-reaching views, secluded dry valleys, network of tiny lanes, isolated farmsteads, churches and oasts, orchards, dramatic cliffs, the ancient woodlands and delicate chalk grassland along with the ancient, remote and tranquil qualities, are valued, secured and strengthened."</i></p>	<p>Achieve a good spread of visitors to districts throughout the year. METRIC: Economic Impact of Tourism Report Decline in total number of respondents who "feel there are too many visitors in their local area"; and whether there is an increase in those who agree that tourism "protects and enhances nature and the environment". METRIC: Visit Kent's annual residents survey. Baseline: 10%/50% agreement – Kent Residents Survey Wave 6.</p>	Year on year	Visit Kent, local authorities, Kent Downs AONB, National Trust
WATER	<p>9. Use clean water wisely and help protect and restore waterways / coastlines / marine</p>	<p>i. Visit Kent and tourism businesses (including food production businesses) in Kent to take steps to minimise their water use All tourism partners in Kent, including Visit Kent, to commit to reducing water use in their operations. Visit Kent to help businesses by publishing online resources and guidance on water use reduction which will also help save money for businesses.</p>	<p>Publish content METRIC: Visit Kent's online data & Visit Kent's annual business survey. Baseline: 38% of businesses actively working to reduce water consumption - Kent</p>	2023	Visit Kent, tourism businesses, visitors

<p>CHERISH OUR WATERS</p> 	<p>environments</p>	<p>ii. Encourage minimisation of pollution in local waterways, coastlines and marine environments by ensuring contaminating substances don't reach drains and pipes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit Kent to help businesses by publishing online resources and guidance on water pollution. - Visit Kent to continue to lobby Southern Water on the impact of sewage dumping and specifically the implications for local tourism. - Businesses, local authorities and Visit Kent to encourage visitors to take litter away with them or dispose of it responsibly. - Visit Kent and tourism businesses to share information with visitors and staff on beach clean ups. 	<p>Annual Business Survey 2023.</p> <p>Publish content METRIC: Visit Kent's online data.</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>Visit Kent, local authorities, tourism businesses, visitors</p>
<p>FORESTS</p> <p>STOP DEFORESTATION</p> 	<p>10. Help end deforestation with more ethical procurement and supply chain choices</p>	<p>All tourism businesses and Visit Kent offices and events, to minimise use of forest-risk commodities e.g. palm oil, soy, leather, rubber, cocoa, paper</p> <p>Local businesses to aim to avoid the direct or indirect purchase via supply chains, of products that harm global forests and ecosystems. Visit Kent to provide online resources and guidance.</p>	<p>Visit Kent to publish content METRIC: Visit Kent's online data.</p> <p>Action by local businesses METRIC: Visit Kent's annual business survey. Baseline: 48% of businesses are working to minimise the use of forest-risk commodities e.g. palm oil, soy, leather, rubber, cocoa, paper - 2023.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Tourism businesses, Visit Kent</p>
COMMUNITY					
<p>GOOD JOBS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE</p>	<p>11. Providing stable, fairly paid jobs for local people</p>	<p>Tourism businesses, including Visit Kent, to provide fairly paid jobs for local people and ensure long term training and development prospects for staff, and apprenticeships as well as a healthy work-life balance.</p> <p>Tourism businesses to work towards paying staff the real living wage. Find out more at www.livingwage.org.uk.</p>	<p>Increase or stability of number of people employed in tourism METRIC: Economic Impact of Tourism Report. Baseline: 2022= 74,462 / 10%</p>	<p>Year on year</p>	<p>All tourism-related businesses, higher and further education partners, local authorities, UK Hospitality</p>

GOOD LOCAL JOBS



<p>Tourism businesses to strive to offer flexible working where possible and promoting a healthy work-life balance for all staff</p> <p>Encourage widespread and year-round economic benefits for the local community via direct and indirect employment, as well as throughout supply chains e.g. 'buying local' and supporting local businesses, enterprises, artisans etc. which also, in turn, helps reduce carbon footprints.</p> <p>Improve perceptions of working in the industry and celebrate exceptional local staff by supporting initiatives such as English Tourism Week, industry award programmes and UK Hospitality campaigns.</p>	<p>Monitor real living wage and flexible working. METRIC: Visit Kent's annual business survey.</p> <p>Training, apprenticeships and staff retention METRIC: Visit Kent's annual business survey.</p> <p>Baseline: 48% of businesses are currently/working towards paying staff the real living wage & 55% offer flexible working hours where possible' & 62% of businesses currently offer opportunities for staff training and apprenticeships.</p> <p>Residents' responses remain stable / increase when asked whether "tourism increases employment opportunities" and that "tourism improves the economy". METRIC: Visit Kent's annual residents survey. Baseline: 88%/92% agreement – Kent Residents survey wave 6.</p> <p>Stable or increase in number of residents who work in tourism METRIC: Visit Kent's annual residents survey. Baseline: 7% – Kent Residents survey wave 6.</p>	<p>Year on year</p> <p>Year on year</p> <p>Year on year</p> <p>Year on year</p> <p>Year on year</p>	
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			Residents' positive responses remain stable or increase when asked whether "working in tourism is an attractive career", particularly among 18-34 age group. METRIC: Visit Kent's annual residents survey. Baseline: 63% – Kent Residents survey wave 6.		
<p>WELLBEING WELL BEING MATTERS</p> 	<p>12. Ensure tourism contributes positively to local residents' wellbeing</p>	<p>i. Ensure tourism in Kent positively contributes to the wellbeing of residents and pride in their local area by increasing engagement with local audiences and regularly monitoring data through our annual resident research</p> <p>Tourism businesses to design and implement an offer that celebrates Kent's local culture and takes into account the wellbeing of residents. Visit Kent to support businesses to develop new authentic local experiences that contribute to wellbeing through research, advice and resources.</p> <p>Visit Kent to actively engage local residents in Kent's natural, cultural and heritage assets encouraging them to participate in more outdoor and creative activities on their doorstep. Support businesses by providing insights into the "Hyper Local" audience and opportunities through dedicated consumer content and resident campaigns such as the Kent Big Weekend.</p>	<p>Residents' responses remain stable or increase when asked if they are: "satisfied with my life"; "live in a beautiful area"; "the local area is calm and peaceful"; "am happy with my lifestyle"; "feel safe". METRIC: Visit Kent's annual residents survey. Baseline: 89%, 82%, 67%, 93% & 86% agreement – Kent Residents survey wave 6.</p> <p>Residents' responses remain stable or decrease when asked whether tourism reduces their ability to access local facilities; increases prices for local amenities or limits parking spaces. METRIC: Visit Kent's annual residents survey. Baseline: 17%, 43% & 64% agreement – Kent Residents survey wave 6.</p>	<p>Year on year</p> <p>Year on year</p>	<p>Visit Kent, tourism businesses</p>

			<p>Residents' survey responses around engagement in wellbeing activities increase year on year. METRIC: Visit Kent's annual residents survey.</p> <p>Measure online data for resident content and campaigns METRIC: Visit Kent's online data. Baseline: 833,317 page views for the Kent Big Weekend campaign and hyper-local features.</p> <p>Kent Big Weekend participant responses remain stable or increase when asked are you, or would you be proud to show your friends and family around Kent. METRIC: Post Kent Big Weekend Participants Survey. Baseline: 95% 'Yes' – 2023 survey</p> <p>Positive response to wellbeing initiatives. METRIC: Visit Kent's annual wellbeing employee survey.</p>	<p>Year on year</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year on year</p> <p>Year on year</p>	
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	13. Ensure all staff / potential staff and visitors / potential	<p>ii. Visit Kent and all tourism businesses to take steps to maintain the wellbeing of their staff Visit Kent to continue their range of initiatives, including wellbeing activities and Wellbeing Champions group for staff, Healthshield plan for staff and families, annual anonymous employee wellbeing questionnaire and regular reminders to take 'green time' for staff during the day.</p> <p>i. Tourism businesses to have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) policy in place and actively promote ED&I Visit Kent and all tourism businesses to take steps to promote equality and fairness during staff recruitment processes and staff promotion opportunities, including for senior leadership positions as well Board roles. Organisations to seek fair representation, at all levels.</p>	<p>All organisations to review, update or implement Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies.</p>	<p>By 2024</p>	<p>All tourism businesses, Visit Kent, schools, local authorities, community groups, HEs, FEs</p>

**EQUAL +
DIVERSE
WORLD**



visitors, feel welcomed

Visit Kent and all tourism businesses to ensure an up-to-date Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) policy is in place.

Consider initiatives such as mentoring and link ups with underserved communities as well as schools, HE and FEs.

Inclusion and diversity training for Visit Kent staff.

Visit Kent vacancies to be advertised working with Ethnic Minority communities in Canterbury (emic.org.uk).

ii. Tourism businesses including Visit Kent, to ensure they have policy and procedures in place that ensures modern slavery (slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude) are not tolerated and reporting mechanisms are in place.

iii. Tourism businesses to review accessibility of their service (on and offline) and take steps to improve

- Visit Kent to encourage more tourism businesses and their employees to take part in free Accessible Kent’s training online.
- Visit Kent to encourage more tourism businesses to sign up for an Access Guide which are based on a surveyor assessment of what to expect on arrival and feature on AccessAble’s website as well as Visit Kent’s website.

iv. Visit Kent and all tourism businesses to ensure diverse and representative marketing that is outwardly welcoming to all.

- Consider photography carefully.
- Ensure diversity of panel speakers at events.
- Visit Kent and others, where relevant, to work with a diverse range of social media influencers.

METRIC: Visit Kent’s annual business survey. Baseline: 41% of businesses have an equality, diversity, and inclusion policy on their website – 2023.

ED&I Training

2023

Visit Kent

Recruitment

By 2024

Visit Kent

METRIC: Visit Kent’s annual business survey. Baseline: 21% of businesses have policy and procedures in place that ensures modern slavery (slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude are not tolerated) on their website – 2023.

2025

All tourism businesses

Year on year

Tourism businesses, Visit Kent, Visit Britain, AccessAble

Increase in number of businesses with accessibility guides published on their website.

2023 onwards


Visit Kent and all tourism businesses [In Our Nature](#)

METRIC: Visit Kent Annual Business Survey. Baseline: 45% of businesses have an accessibility guide published on their website – 2023.

Review imagery and events briefs. Partnerships with diverse online influencers.

Ongoing

Visit Kent

		<p>v. Visit Kent to actively promote local events, festivals and places that celebrate underrepresented groups within the local community, as well as those businesses who are finding ways to ensure diverse visitor groups are welcomed.</p> <p>Ensure the Kent Big Weekend is promoted to and encourages diverse participation from businesses and visitors.</p>	Marketing content.		
<p>CULTURAL HERITAGE</p> <p>CULTURE</p> 	<p>14. Impact on cultural heritage</p>	<p>Tourism businesses and relevant local authorities to work together to ensure that local cultural attractions benefit from tourism as much as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work together to secure funding and investment that enhances and preserves heritage. - Increase opportunities to engage with heritage assets. <p>Visit Kent to actively promote those tourist attractions that help preserve and conserve the local cultural heritage of the area.</p>	<p>Residents' responses increase when asked whether "tourism preserves historic buildings and monuments."</p> <p>METRIC: Visit Kent's annual residents survey. Baseline: 92% agreement – Kent Residents survey wave 6.</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Local authorities, tourism businesses with cultural heritage interest</p> <p>Visit Kent</p>
ACTION PLAN MANAGEMENT					
<p>MANAGEMENT & IMPLEMENTATION</p> <p>COMMIT + COLLABORATE</p>	<p>15. Working Group – Act for Impact: to review progress of the sustainable tourism action plan</p>	<p>i. Visit Kent to establish a collaborative working group and publicly announce commitments to action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working group to be made up of key stakeholders including representatives from the local communities as well as nature-regenerative organisations and Visit Kent CEO - Working group to publicly commit to the action plan (published online) with a Pact for Impact, and other tourism businesses to be encouraged to do the same. <p>ii. Assign a member of staff from Visit Kent to oversee the long term implementation of the plan, organise working group meetings and to take on a secretariat role.</p> <p>iii. Ensure ongoing support and communication at Board as well as a senior exec level within Visit Kent</p> <p>iv. Share sustainability business resources with tourism-related businesses</p>	<p>Working Group to meet and publicly commit</p> <p>Visit Kent personnel</p> <p>Visit Kent Board</p> <p>Publish Content METRIC: Visit Kent's online data.</p>	<p>2023</p> <p>2024</p> <p>2023</p> <p>2023</p>	<p>Visit Kent, green and nature conservation organisations, tourism businesses, local authorities</p> <p>Visit Kent</p> <p>Visit Kent</p> <p>Visit Kent</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publish resources online with best practice examples and case studies - Send regular sustainability mailouts to tourism businesses - Run webinars when possible and invite local businesses to speak and share inspiring examples <p>v. Share accurate, transparent sustainable tourism messaging with visitors and potential visitors via marketing channels</p>	Marketing	2023 Ongoing	Visit Kent
REPORTING TRANSPARENCY + ACCOUNTABILITY	16. Annual impact report	<p>Publish annual impact report to track and report progress against each of this action plan's 16 indicators, as part of Visit Kent's annual review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing monitoring and reporting of local communities' satisfaction levels with regards to tourism sustainability issues in Kent - Ongoing monitoring and reporting of visitors' satisfaction levels with regards to tourism's sustainability issues in Kent and clear processes in place for handling feedback on issues - Ongoing reporting of economic impact of tourism in Kent - Ongoing monitoring of progress made by tourism businesses in key areas of the sustainable tourism action plan - Ensuring the business survey reaches a diverse and wide range of businesses in Kent via efficient database management at Visit Kent. 	Publish impact report	Annually from 2024	Visit Kent

UN Sustainable Development Goals

We have mapped our action plan against the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and have the greatest potential for impact on the following areas:

