

# LEONARDO PROJECT

## Project: Training Tourism Site Network

### Training for the Sustainable Development of Tourism Destinations

#### CASE-STUDY FRAME

#### The New Forest - England

#### Part 1: Introduction to the Region and the Procedure

##### Name of the Community

New Forest District

##### Profile of the Community

Surface Area:	290miles <sup>2</sup> or 751km <sup>2</sup>	
Administrative Location:	District Council within the County of Hampshire	
Geographic Location:	Southern England, 90 miles from London and situated between Southampton and Bournemouth.	
Population:	179,690	
Domains:	The New Forest National Park is contained within the District (536km <sup>2</sup> ) and is managed by the New Forest National Park Authority. Tourism development and promotion is managed by New Forest District Council for the whole District area.	
District Council Budget:	£ 17,000,00	2005/06
Tourism Service Budget:	£313,240 (net)	2005/06
Staff:	£266,120	
Operations:	£370,810	
Expenditure:	£636,930	
Income:	£449,340	
Net Expenditure:	£187,590	
Corporate Costs:	<u>£125,650</u>	
Net Expenditure:	<u>£313,240</u>	

##### Strategy

No longer can tourism be regarded solely as a local, regional or even national issue, it is global. The implications of this for New Forest District are profound. On the one hand we need a prosperous tourism industry to sustain jobs and the local economy, on the other, environmental and social pressure from increased numbers of visitors could undermine the quality of life and the resources on which the industry itself depends.

By its nature our strategy is focused on New Forest District, but to be successful it will also have to relate to a regional, national, European and world-wide stage. Tourism will only ever be effectively managed through partnership at all levels, so we hope the strategy will also positively influence all decisions as and where they affect tourism in our District.

Our aim is for New Forest District to become a tourism destination where the visitor, tourism industry, local community and environment are in complete harmony, and thus make a significant contribution to improving the quality of all life.

## **Policies**

### National and Regional Tourism Policies

- To lobby Central Government and all national and regional tourism organisations to ensure local tourism needs are reflected in their policies and actions.

### Partnerships

- To work in partnership with all agencies, organisations and individuals to promote the interests of tourism, particularly in maintaining an effective local tourism association and network of community tourism groups.

### Visitors

- To encourage all partners to welcome all visitors and provide them with a high quality experience and a better understanding of the needs of local people and environment.

### Industry

- To encourage the tourism and visitor industry to work together in providing excellent services and facilities for visitors which respect the needs of the community and environment both now and in the future.
- To retain a viable and prosperous tourism industry throughout the year.

### Community

- To involve the local community in its tourism activities and encourage partners to do likewise.

### Environment

- To ensure that all tourism is managed in order to control its impact and where possible, achieve a positive effect on the environment.

### Research

- To maintain an effective programme of research to inform all tourism management and development decisions.

### Information

- To provide consistent, well communicated information services for the benefit of all visitors and local people throughout the year and convey the special nature of the District and contribute to effective visitor management.

- To provide a strategic network of staffed Visitor Information Centres as the main points of contact with visitors and local people.
- To provide in partnership with other agencies, unmanned Visitor Information Points at agreed locations throughout the District to provide 24 hour information and support the main provision of staffed Visitor Information Centres.

### Signing

- To recognise that good tourism sign posting and routing is an essential part of effective visitor management and will in partnership with the Highway Authority and other interested parties actively encourage, establish and maintain a comprehensive tourism and visitor signing system throughout the District without compromising the conservation of the New Forest.

### Interpretation

- To work with partners to ensure the messages in all interpretative and educational activities are consistent and reflect the Council's policies.

### Quality Standards

- To support the efforts of all national agencies to develop a national scheme for the compulsory registration, classification and quality grading of all sectors of the tourism industry and ensure its use in all activities.
- To work with all interests to improve Quality Standards in all sectors of the local tourism industry.

### Training

- To work with all interests to establish excellent levels of training in all sectors of the tourism industry in order to support the drive towards a quality destination.

### Operations

- To work with all interests to improve the environmental performance of all sectors of the tourism and visitor industry through the adoption of agreed standards and methods.

### Marketing

- That all marketing activities convey the special nature of the District and contribute to effective management by regulating and attracting target audiences in appropriate numbers to the right place at the right time.
- To develop an all year destination, especially for serviced accommodation, increase length of stay and spend per capita, thereby increasing full time employment and consistency of income.
- To undertake all marketing activity in partnership with New Forest Tourism Association and all other interested parties.
- To secure additional resources and support for the Council's marketing activities through new partnerships, sponsorship and other forms of appropriate revenue raising.
- To develop and improve the range and quality of all the Council's published tourism material.

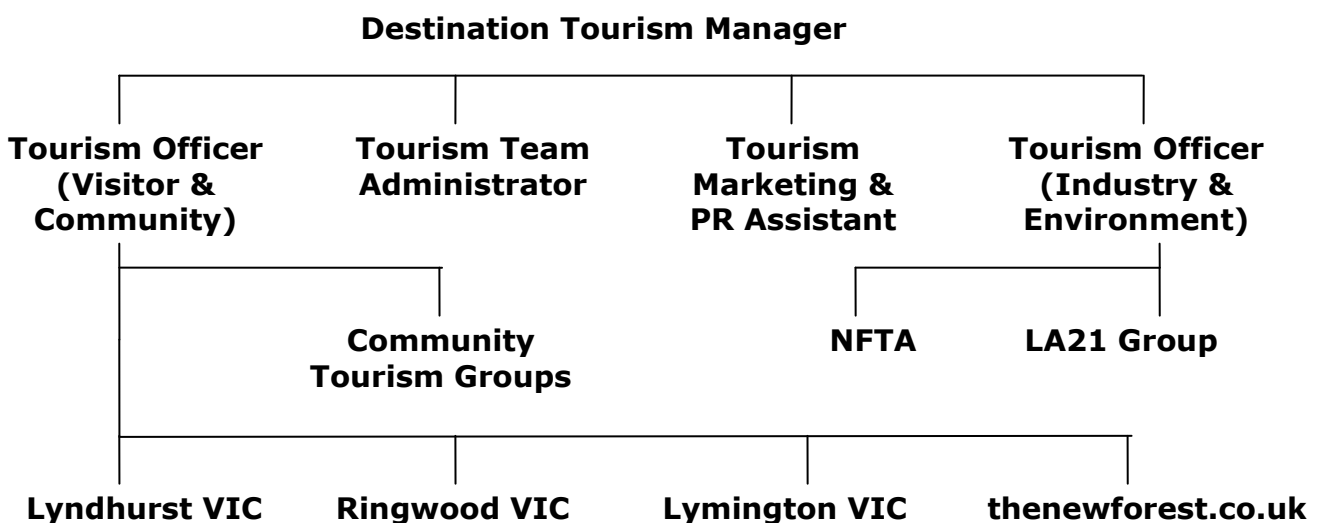
## Planning

- To guide all tourism development within the policies of the Hampshire County Structure Plan, the New Forest District Local Plan and to work within the framework of “A Strategy for the New Forest”.
- To recognise the needs of all tourism businesses to adapt to change within the constraints of the District.
- To resist the loss of existing serviced accommodation especially Hotels.
- To discourage proposals for new time share and self catering accommodation, except for small scale proposals which relate to the diversification of existing businesses and the re-use of redundant buildings.
- To promote tourism’s role in the regeneration of local settlements, especially Ringwood, Fordingbridge, Hythe and Totton.
- To promote good practice in the best use of existing and redundant buildings for tourism and visitor purposes.
- To work with partners especially Town and Parish Councils to improve the quality of the visitor environment in settlements.

## Transportation

- To ensure that all tourism activity and development in the District has regard to the appropriate Highway Authority Transportation Strategy.
- To recognise that within the District there are potentially perfect Car Free areas and where appropriate all tourism activity should utilise alternative modes of transport especially walking and cycling.
- To work with partners to establish coach, rail and air links to the District from target UK markets and ports of entry.
- To work with Hampshire County Council / New Forest Tourism Association and other partners to establish public transport links between all settlements and visitor attractions in the District.

### NFDC TOURISM STRUCTURE CHART



## **Part 2: Description of the Sustainable Tourism Process**

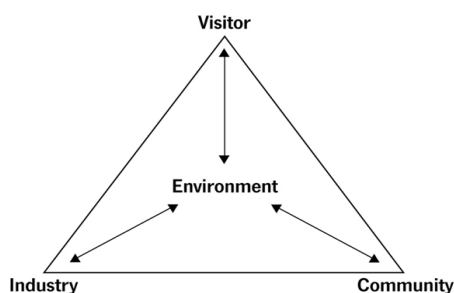
### **STEP 1. Introduction: Motivation / triggering of the process inside the destination / community / concerned group.**

When New Forest District Council established its tourism management service in the mid 80's it started to publicly debate the idea that tourism could be used as an agent to improve all aspects of local life if it was done appropriately.

To promote this concept the Council published an issues paper "Living with the enemy?" proposing the "VICE" model as the means of creating stakeholder engagement and collective action to benefit all interests and establish a sustainable future.

### **STEP 2. Establish an Effective and Participatory Process.**

The "VICE" model is based on the idea that a destination's tourism activity is made up of interaction between the four groups of stakeholder interests that make up society in the New Forest: Visitors, Industry, Community and Environment.



Following many consultative exercises, to enact the relationships between each of these four groups, the Council published a tourism and visitor management strategy "Our Future Together" (OFT). The policies, objectives and actions of OFT are repeated in the organisations and agencies with responsibility in the New Forest. - The transitional National Park Plan, The Highway Plan, The Local District Plan, The Community Plan and many others. The policies are also cross cutting within the Council's directorates and services and those of its key business partners.

The most important business partnership is with the New Forest Tourism Association (NFTA), a 250 strong membership organisation representing and working in all sectors of the local industry. All members work in sectoral groups and have to participate in the relevant national quality schemes. NFTA is engaged with all destination management programmes.

### **STEP 3. Conduct a Sustainability Inventory – state of play of the situation in the field of sustainable development.**

To set benchmarks, the process of assessing the current visitor, industry, community and environment was started via a destination wide survey in 1992. Since then a variety of research has been conducted into all aspects of tourism's impact on the New Forest district. The four destination management delivery programmes all contain elements of research and the continuous improvement cycle of the VICE management model ensures that even with limited resources, considerable amounts of information can be collected.

- The Visitor Stewardship programme collects visitor profiling/interests data.
- The Marketing & Product Development programme collects customer and product data.
- The Community Tourism programme collects resident perception/ visitor perception and local environmental data.
- The LA21 Tourism programme collects industry (waste, energy reduction) data and other sustainable output.

Because of the interrelationship between each stakeholder group and each element of destination management, all this data can be shared and utilised many times.

**STEP 4. Set a Community Sustainability Vision.**

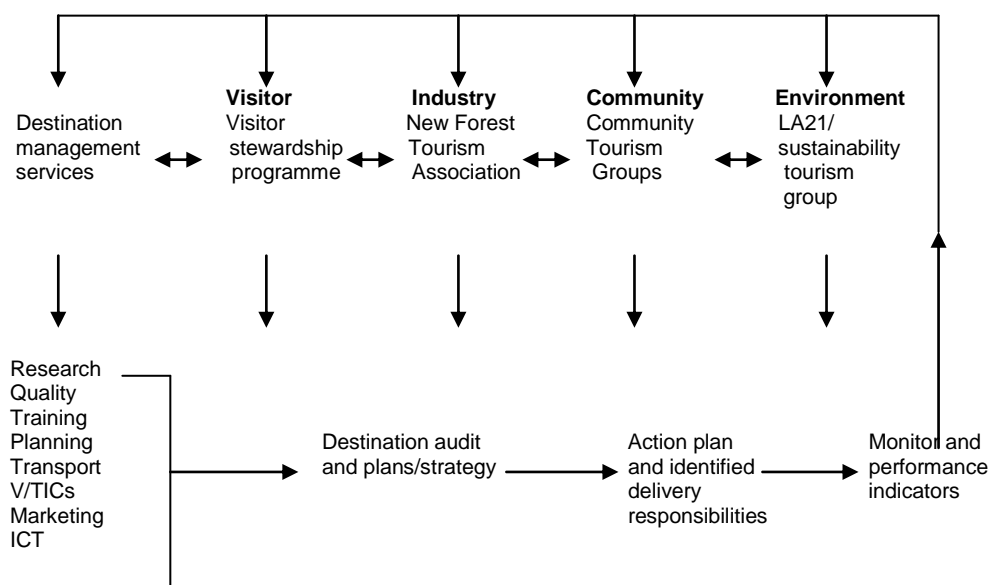
Community Tourism Groups provide the means of engagement for each separate New Forest community to create its own vision to link with that of the wider destination. The model also creates links between each community, its tourism businesses, environment managers and visitors, potentially creating a local sustainable tourism culture through local ownership. Each also links into the destination’s wider quality, local distinctiveness and marketing programme.

Recently the New Forest Citizens Panel (769 residents) was surveyed on the tourism policies and actions of the council’s tourism service. Interestingly 89% agreed with the need for a sustainable tourism development strategy. 88% agreed with the “VICE” model as a means of achieving this and an amazing 58% thought we were already successfully delivering it.

**STEP 5. Develop and Implement a Sustainability Action Strategy.**

In the New Forest, the partnership between all the many community interests and local and regional government agencies is brought together in OFT. The strategy remains broadly unchanged because we have yet to achieve a sustainable destination. The continuous process of the management model means that outputs are constantly improved by each new action.

**New Forest Destination Management Model (VICE)**



The four key delivery programmes have become more founded in real sustainable actions than fine words, but it is a difficult task to find resources to drive improvements. The re-launch of the LA21 programme in partnership with Tourism South East is however enabling more industry training in sustainable business performance.

The New Forest strategy then links into the Dorset New Forest Sub Regional Tourism Partnership to both the South West and the South East regions on to the government and international British tourism processes.

#### **STEP 6. Monitor and Evaluate Progress.**

The “VICE” Model has a rolling monitoring process based on the annual benchmarking of a variety of performance outputs from the sustainable content of PR activities to the waste performance of hotels. The overall plan is currently being reviewed having been revised once previously.

The LA21 kit for instance is now more accessible for small businesses data collection and has become more a tool for sustainable development by providing better advice and training to help businesses in the improvement process.

There are many other measurable results which will soon be connected to a fully integrated Destination Management System (ICT). This will enable us to better electronically collect data from the visitor, industry, community and environment programmes, allowing cross tabulation to create a set of initial sustainable destination indicators of our overall social, economic and environmental performance.

#### **STEP 7. Results.**

The results of our work are difficult to quantify in the constantly shifting sands of the domestic and international markets. However, we can provide some simple facts such as a year on year increase in the number of accommodation businesses participating in the “Little Acorns” sustainability/LA21 programme.

We have a better integrated public transport network with the introduction of the circular tour bus and cycle trailer linking with the off road cycle network, bus, ferry and train. Another new network is of local producers supplying hotels and restaurants direct under a New Forest quality marque.

We have integrated policies with those of our partners and collective action is now commonplace. The Citizens Panel also shows strong community support for sustainable action as does our contact with visitors.

#### **STEP 8. Lessons learned & Key replication factors.**

The “VICE” model works and can be replicated in any destination setting, even where the community is historically hostile to tourism. Vision, leadership, open debate and clear information can bring about positive, collective action towards a sustainable future.

The initiation role must be undertaken by local government who alone can play the crucial role of honest broker to enable true collective ownership and action from the sometimes competing local interests that must work together to create a locally owned and sustainable tourism future.

For the last 15 years, we have worked with a wide range of local interests to improve the management of tourism in a way that resolves conflicts, minimises adverse impacts and brings benefits to all concerned. Our approach with each of the groups of stakeholders representing visitors, the tourism industry, the local community and the environment is as follows:

- To understand and address their individual needs first, so building up their trust and confidence.
- To encourage them to understand the concerns of the other constituencies and to take action to meet them.
- To help them appreciate that this wider action can very often also be of direct benefit to themselves and to help them gain this benefit.
- To establish an agreed plan and work with all partners to deliver it, undertaking regular review on the way.

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