

1066 Country

Business Plan and 3-Year Action Plan

2024-2027

Working with members to grow the visitor economy



1066
Country

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Executive Summary

Introduction

1066 Country Marketing is the destination management organisation (DMO) for the Hastings, Rother and the south-east of Wealden tourism offer. It is a public/private sector partnership, established in the early 1990's tasked with destination management and marketing for the area, promoting the area nationally and internationally, to grow the visitor economy and deliver positive impacts in the area.

1066 Country is built around the nationally-recognised 1066 brand and covers an area of approximately 378 square miles of coast and countryside including the main settlements of Battle, Bexhill, Hastings and Rye and stretches from Herstmonceux to Camber and north to Ticehurst and Flimwell.

Core activities:

- **Consumer Marketing**

The primary activity relates to destination marketing based on the area's priority visitor markets delivered through website, digital channels, attractions guide and monthly newsletters.

- **Campaigns**

1066 Country has designed and delivered a range of domestic and international campaigns.

- **Social Media marketing**

An increasing import function of 1066 Country and its member organisations.

- **Press Relations / Press Trips**

Responding to requests from the sector to host visits

- **Travel Trade and Groups**

The 1066 Team attends various travel trade shows, including Excursions.

- **Signposting**

1066 Country performs a development role linking tourism businesses with other areas of the sector.

- **Research, data and intelligence**

1066 Country provides a range of research data and trend mapping giving a broad overview of the national visitor economy picture from both inbound and domestic perspectives.

Impact:

Tourism in Sussex 2019:	Tourism in 1066 Country 2019:
£5 billion of impact	£704.2m of impact
62 million visitors	12.51m visitor trips
74,000 full-time-equivalent jobs	11,467 full-time-equivalent jobs

Key Challenges for Members:

- Regional brand awareness and attracting overseas guests
- Accessing media and PR opportunities
- Help to drive business in the quieter months
- Sharing new campaign and events across multimedia platforms
- Help / training / workshops with merging social media technology development
- Reaching new audiences and bringing people to 1066 Country
- Driving footfall, information sharing / best practice

Business Plan Priorities:

1. Consumer marketing and area promotion
2. Media engagement
3. Travel trade and group marketing
4. Online press

1. Introduction

1066 Country Marketing is the destination management organisation (DMO) for the Hastings, Rother and the south-east of Wealden tourism offer. It is a public/private sector partnership, established in the early 1990's tasked with destination management and marketing for the area, promoting the area nationally and internationally, to grow the visitor economy and deliver positive impacts in the area.

1.1 1066 Country Business Plan – what we want to achieve

The Business Plan builds on the success of 1066 Country and sets out priorities and activities for the next three years, with a particular focus on 2024/25, which has been identified as a period of transition.

The Business Plan sets out the tourism context and profile for 1066 Country. It provides the foundation for launching a new approach and opportunities to support members and generate future funding, partnerships and prospects. Critically, the plan sets out a range of options for delivery to sustain the promotion of the area and realise the brand potential of 1066 Country. The aim is for 1066 Country to move forward as a local destination management organisation with the engagement and support of key stakeholders and to deliver actions to attract more visitors and encourage people who are already visiting to stay longer, explore further and spend more during their trips. A priority of the Business Plan is to stimulate actions to generate more members and income, thereby reducing its reliance on grant funding.

The Business Plan takes account of the needs of the visitors themselves, businesses and the operating environment. It embraces the idea of financial sustainability i.e. tourism which brings economic benefit, is sensitive to the environment, is welcomed by the community and results in satisfied visitors and members. Delivering a quality experience to the visitor is a priority, across all 'touch points', before, during and after a visit.

1.2 The new context

The Business Plan has been developed in response to a number of factors, which will influence the organisation's future direction of travel.

The **Covid-19** pandemic has undeniably had a devastating impact on the tourism and hospitality sector. Despite this, and through 1066 Country support, the sector has remained resilient with positive results in terms of sustainable growth. There has also been investment in products and businesses across the destination. However, the domestic market continues to face challenges on two fronts: the cost of living crisis affecting consumer finance, and the strong bounce-back in overseas holidays post-pandemic.

Brexit has had an impact on UK tourism. An increase in bureaucracy, as well as a rise in the cost of hiring overseas staff, is affecting UK tourist businesses. A number of hospitality businesses are reporting staff shortages as the new immigration procedures after Brexit mean fewer workers are arriving in the UK from the EU and further afield. The UK's image overseas has also been impacted following Brexit. The latest annual Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brand Index study shows that the UK's rank for **welcome** remains low, dipping to 19th out of 60 nations, the lowest rank ever received for this measure. The UK (including 1066 Country) was a popular destination in a global English language teaching industry but the sector has been hit by both the Covid-19 pandemic and the end of freedom of movement. Covid-19 travel restrictions physically prevented our students from reaching the UK and ending freedom of movement means 60% of UK customers, Europeans, cannot reach us without the cost and bureaucracy of a passport.

Pressure on **local authorities** to fund non statutory services with ever reducing government budgets is increasingly an issue. The withdrawal of Hastings Borough Council funding in 2023/24 and the transfer of all 1066 Country assets to Rother District Council, who have become the new accountable body of behalf of the partnership, has provided the impetus to re-assess all aspects of the partnership and to ensure its viability into the future. However, the withdrawal of Hastings Borough Council also has a significant impact on 1066 Country resources. Financial pressures on local government are likely to limit the ability of local authority funding partners to sustain funding support over the long term.

1.3 A changing landscape for tourism support

The implementation of a new tiering system of DMOs is an outcome of the De Bois review which found high levels of fragmentation across England which limited the potential of the visitor economy.

This review has led to the creation of a portfolio of nationally supported, strategic and high-performing **Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP)** to provide strong local leadership and governance in their destination and this will clearly impact on 1066 Country. Partners in Sussex have secured the agreement from VisitBritain to establish a Sussex Visitor Economy Partnership for the region. The new LVEP strategy is currently in development. An important focus for 1066 Country is to understand and balance regional and local activities and roles and responsibilities to support the development of the visitor economy in the area in a way that reflects regional and local variations and budgetary pressures.

Alongside the creation of the new LVEP, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council have agreed to fund **Experience Sussex**, a West / East Sussex DMO which builds on the success of, and replaces, Experience West Sussex to work across both county regions. Experience West Sussex has worked directly with its District and Borough led DMOs for some time in the west of the county but this has not been the case in East Sussex where

local DMOs have not been supported by County and it is vital that this new collaborative approach is adopted in the east of the county.

The tourism landscape in Sussex also includes **Sussex Modern**, a business consortium founded in 2017 which celebrates culture, art, wine and landscape and has taken a lead on wine tourism development across Sussex developing the Sussex Wine Tourism: Plan for Growth. Rother is subsequently working on delivering a pan Sussex branding and signage project with UKSPF funding, as the next step in this journey.

Financial pressures on local government are limiting the ability to support the visitor economy. Recent investments through the Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund (including the Rural England Prosperity Fund), has provided some discretionary funding to support tourism in 2023-25). Indeed, Bexhill-on-Sea and Hastings are among 75 towns in the UK who are set to receive £20 million over a 10-year period to develop Long-Term Plans¹ to help regenerate high streets, tackle anti-social behaviour and boost visitor numbers and grow the economy. Both towns have established town boards to help design and deliver a 10 Year Plan for consultation. It will be important for 1066 Country to position itself as the destination management organisation for the area and explore future funding opportunities with both boards. Funding scenarios and programmes regularly change, so should be kept under review with sufficient flexibility to respond to any opportunities that arise.

1.4 How the Business Plan has been developed

Preparation of the Business Plan has involved an extensive programme of consultation and engagement with the Executive Board, members and key stakeholders. The Business Plan also builds on the experiences of other similar DMOs and the tourism trends facing the area.

¹ Long Term Plan for Towns programme is on pause as this plan is agreed.

2. 1066 Country Operating Context and Activities

2.1 Background

1066 Country Marketing has been in existence for over 20 years as a public private sector partnership, with the objective of promoting the interests of tourism in 1066 Country through marketing campaigns and other associated initiatives. The organisation includes a number of core public sector partners, including funding partners Rother District Council and Wealden District Council alongside National Trust and English Heritage. It has a current membership of 164.

Since its formation, 1066 Country has become a central voice for tourism marketing in the region, with a focus on supporting the sustainable growth of the visitor economy. As with the rest of the UK, the visitor economy has been significantly impacted by Covid-19. As a rapid response to the pandemic, 1066 Country supported a range of activities to coordinate business support, change market positioning and managing the flow of changing Government guidance.

1066 Country is directed by an Executive Board, which comprises:

- Officers of Rother District Council and Wealden District Council
- A representative of East Sussex County Council
- A representative from English Heritage
- Two representatives from the 1066 Country Attractions Group, appointed biennially in rotation and eligible for reselection
- Up to five individuals representing appropriate geographical area/town/District, appointed biennially in rotation and eligible for reselection.

An important component of the Business Plan is to review and recommend future governance arrangements in light of the challenges and opportunities facing the organisation and future delivery structure.

2.2 Core Activities

1066 Country is built around the nationally-recognised 1066 brand and covers an area of approximately 378 square miles of coast and countryside including the main settlements of Battle, Bexhill, Hastings and Rye and stretches from Herstmonceux to Camber and north to Ticehurst and Flimwell.

1066 Country operates as a membership organisation, providing a suite of marketing and advertising opportunities at three levels: Gold, Silver and Bronze. Membership currently stands at 164 and includes private sector members outside but bordering the core area.

Although it is not a single coherent tourism entity or defined geography, 1066 Country has a strong brand identity associated with the Battle of Hastings. The 1066 Country Marketing Strategy 2016-25 (Blus Sail), identified a range of marketing priorities and still provides the framework for destination marketing:

A clear market focus on Families, Cultural Explorers and the iGeneration.
 A narrative which can be used by all involved in selling the destination.
 A focus on ‘Inspiration’ and ‘Awareness’, leaving the bookings to business.
 A focus on digital as a medium and amplification through 3rd parties.
 A focus on off-peak and events spreading the benefits and value across the year.
 The selling of inspiration, experiences, themes and itineraries rather than a list of products.

Core activities:

1) Consumer Marketing

The primary activity relates to destination marketing based on the area’s priority visitor markets delivered through numerous channels, including:

- <https://www.visit1066country.com/> website, hosted via a £20k per annum contract with Simpleview, which is up for renewal in July 2024.
- 1066 Country Attraction Guide (300,000 printed for 2-year guide). The guide, which will be launched in April 2024, is almost 100% funded through selling advertisement space to members.
- E-newsletter, which is distributed to a database of around 13,000 mainly domestic visitors and on the website.

To date, there has been no formal evaluation of the website or attractions guide. However, the new website, launched in October 2019 has seen a significant increase in user traffic over the last three years, as outlined in the table below.

Table 1: Webstats: 1066 Country website ‘hits’

	2023	2022	2021
Total hits	411,821	463,316	389,718
Monthly average	34,318	38,610	32,477

2) Campaigns

1066 Country has designed and delivered a range of campaigns. Opportunities have been taken to collaborate on a range of campaigns including:

- **Domestic:** The highly impactful Moments Campaign delivered a successful poster campaign, website, social media and newsletters to promote different perceptions on the visitor offer. A range of posters were shown at different locations including TfL undergrounds stations, Gatwick Airport, Charing Cross and Victoria railway stations and along the Bexhill-on-Sea and Hastings seafronts
- **International:** 1066 Country buys-in to Tourism South East (TSE) marketing (£5k Service Level Agreement with TSE), including:
 - USA/Canada: timescales June 2023 – March 2024.
 - Near Europe (Germany, Belgium, UK on your doorstep, UK Inbound) & Nordics campaigns booked and underway.
 - Vakantiebeurs participation (January 2024) – NL market in partnership with Eastbourne and Lewes.
 - International newsletters to TSE travel trade database.

3) Social Media

- Instagram
- Facebook
- X
- Threads
- TiKTok

The marketing campaign for the shoulder months (June / July and Sept/Oct) 2024 is focused entirely around increasing Instagram followers and directly them to the 1066County website. This has been developed in partnership with Playne Design and Kitty Lineker and develops the Moments campaign for social media.

The general feeling expressed during consultation with members and the Executive Board is that this is an area that requires further development.

4) Press Relations / Press Trips

A significant list of press contacts has been built over the last 5 years but due to reduced resources and limited capacity, this activity is now reactive (although TSE has been helpful in generating leads). Activities have included:

- 10-page insert in Food and Drink magazine promoting the growing Viticulture product theme;
- Working with influencers; and
- Working with intermediary organisations to provide an enhanced, joined up offer.
- Press Trips are of excellent value to participating members and help to raise local profile in a cost effective way.

5) Travel Trade and Groups

The 1066 Team attends various travel trade shows, including Excursions, where the cost of the stand was shared equally with three partners. Groups were seen as an important function 5 years ago but as the team has become smaller, these activities have diminished. The lack of group accommodation means that there is limited capacity for coach parties.

6) Signposting

1066 Country performs a limited development role. It does aim to service enquiries from members as and when, e.g. enquiries regarding brown signs, training/funding opportunities. The monthly newsletter is a key tool to signpost member businesses to new events and opportunities, though it is understood that using this one tool does not work for all members. Throughout Covid the newsletter and member updates were key in keeping members abreast of changes and opportunities.

Although membership engagement is identified as being important (and valued), formal events are limited to 2 attraction meetings per annum and an annual AGM.

7) Research, data and intelligence

Through its Service Level Agreement with TSE, 1066 Country provides a range of research data and trend mapping giving a broad overview of the national visitor economy picture from both inbound and domestic perspectives. Annual Economic Impact Studies have been compiled by TSE using the Cambridge Tourism Economic Impact Model or 'Cambridge Model'; a computer-based model developed by Geoff Broom Associates and the Regional Tourist Boards of England. In its basic form, the model distributes regional activity as measured in national surveys to local areas using 'drivers' such as accommodation stock and occupancy which influence the distribution of tourism at a local level.

- The Great Britain Day Visits Survey (GBDVS) measures the volume, value and trip characteristics of tourism day visits in Britain
- Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS) measures the volume and value of domestic overnight tourism trips in Britain (covering all purposes of tourism such as holidays, visits to friends and relatives and business) taken by British residents.

Both of these surveys underpin the results from the Cambridge Economic Impact Model results.

1066 Country, Hastings BC, Rother DC and Wealden DC have been commissioning these studies since 2004, giving a strong comparative data set to work from.

2.3 Resources

The withdrawal of support from Hastings Borough Council has had a significant impact on the operating budget for 1066 Country. The latest budget information shows that the operating budget for 2023/24 is **£127,786**, which is forecast to reduce to **£120,537** in 2024/25.

Operating expenditure is summarised in the table below.

Table 2. 1066 Country: Operating Budget

	2023/24	2024/25
Core 'fundamentals', e.g. website etc	£29,445	£39,445
International Reach	£9,150	£30,864 ²
Domestic Reach	£21,381	(marketing)
Subscriptions	£7,310	£6,300
Miscellaneous	£15,500	
Staff costs	£45,000	£58,928 ³
	£127,786	£135,537

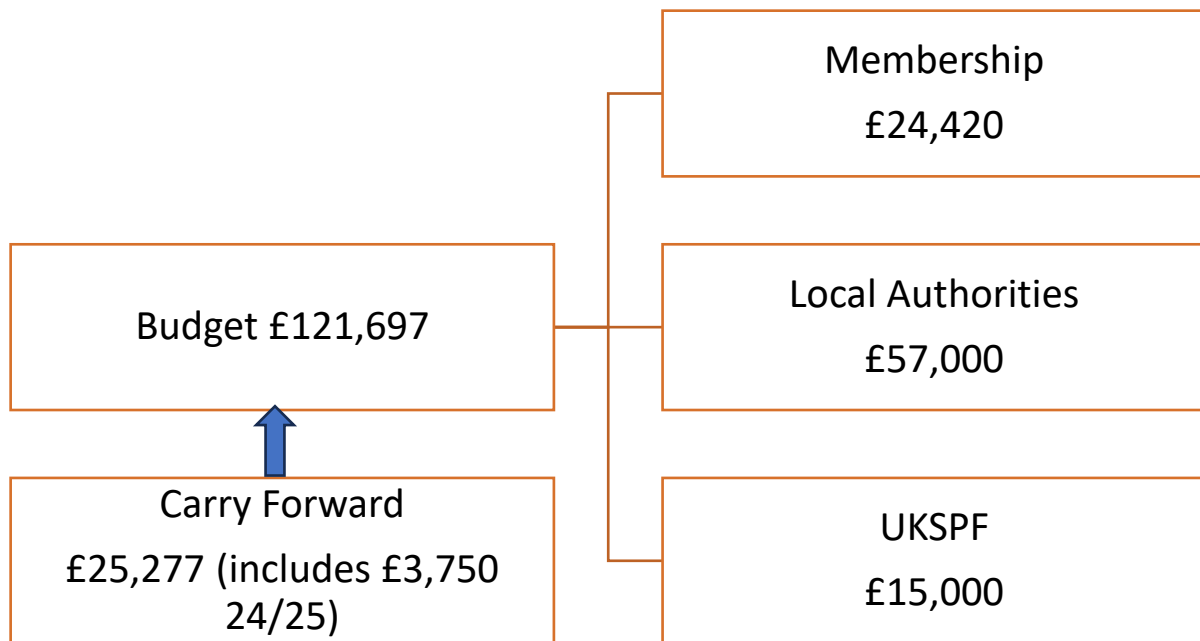
The major impact is with regards to resourcing destination marketing in 2024/25, which has seen almost a halving of its operating budget.

As with the majority of Destination Management Organisations, 1066 Country is reliant on funding support from its local authority partners. When you take into account a significant carry forward, over 75% of the organisations secured income for 2024/25 is from the public sector.

² Includes £15,000 social media campaign

³ Includes expenses (£2,400) and contingency (£2,500)

Table 3. 1066 Country: Secured Income 2024/25



A shortfall of £13,840 is forecast for the organisation in 2024/25 despite a reduction in next year's operating budget. It is hoped that this shortfall can be made up with additional support through additional UK Shared Prosperity funding allocation or from other sources.

Building financial stability and resilience is a key issue for 1066 Country moving forward. A core component of the Business Plan is to consider options for reducing the budget deficit, growing the operating budget and, overtime, reducing the financial contributions from the two local authorities.

3. Where we are now: Performance and Trends

3.1 National and Regional Context

UK tourism is predicted to grow over the next decade and could be worth up to 10% of the total UK economy if national and local policy remains supportive in the medium to long-term. The growth conditions for Sussex with its mix of urban and rural, coast and countryside as well as proximity to London, appear to be positive.

In 2019, the visitor economy proved to be a significant economic driver for Sussex – delivering £5 billion of impact, attracting 62 million visitors and supporting 74,000 full-time-equivalent jobs. Staying visits (11% visits and 50% spend) and overseas staying visits in particular (2% visits and 19% spend) were very significant for Sussex with above England-average spend and visitor numbers. In this context, the overseas market provides an opportunity for accelerated post-pandemic growth given the value that potential international visitors present. Extrapolated results for East Sussex suggest somewhere in the region of 16.3 million visits to its districts in 2021, delivering £1.17 billion in economic impact and supporting approximately 19,900 FTE jobs⁴.

The visitor economy continues to be a significant and growing sector within the 1066 sub-region. The area combines an outstanding natural environment with historic towns and villages in close proximity to London and the south-east markets.

3.2 1066 Country Tourism Performance

1066 Country subscribe to the ‘Cambridge Model’ to assess the volume and value of tourism and the impact of visitor activity in the 1066 Country region. The 2022 Cambridge data results provide a comparator with 2019 as a benchmark for the last ‘normal’ year before the impacts of Covid-19 in 2020 in respect of economic impact, employment and visitor profile, origin and purpose. The headline figures are as follows:

Table 4: Comparative Performance

Visitor Type						
	Overnight visits (Million)		Day visitors (Million)		Total (Million)	
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022
1066 Country	1.15	0.83	11.36	12.67	12.51	13.50

TSE: Cambridge Model 2022

The headline figures show positive growth driven mostly by an increase in day visitors to the area. It is interesting to note the predominance of day visitors which reaches above 90%

⁴ Visitor Economy Initiative: Baseline Report, Blue Sail August 2023

within 1066 Country. This immediately points to an important strategic priority to develop and enhance the volume and value of overnight tourist stays in the area.

In excess of £37.6 million is spent on average in the 1066 Country economy every month generated by visitor activity. However, this is over £11 million less than in 2019.

Table 5: Economic Impact

Economic Impact		
	2019	2022
£million generated from day trips	£326	£246.7
£million generated by overnight visits	£266.3	£204.7
£million spent in the local area as a result of tourism (taking into account multiplier effect)	£664.7	£627.1

TSE: Cambridge Model 2022

Tourism represents an important employer in the districts with in excess of 12,206 jobs directly supported by the sector although this is 12% lower than in 2019.

Table 6: Tourism Employment

Tourism Employment / Jobs		
	2019	2022
Tourism jobs directly supported	13,690	12,206
Non-tourism related jobs supported	2,403	2,127
% of population employed as a result of tourism	21.5	19.1

TSE: Cambridge Model 2022

The East Sussex population is projected to grow by over 65,000 in the next 15 years⁵, with a large increase in the number of people aged 60+, comparing to little change in younger age groups. The population is projected to increase in all districts, with a significant rise in Rother and Wealden.

Table 7: Projected population change: 2022-2037

	2022	2037	Change 2020-2035	% change 2020- 35
Rother	94,200	103,300	9,100	9.7%
Wealden	163,000	196,000	33,000	20.2%
ESCC	550,700	616,300	65,600	11.9%

Source: East Sussex County Council Feb 2024

⁵ ESCC Demographic Projections Feb 2024

In 2020, almost a third of Rother’s population (32%) were aged 65+, ranking second highest of all districts/UAs in the country. This is expected to increase to 39% by 2035.

The tourism sector still has a way to go to recover and rebuild from the impact of the global pandemic. There are some structural issues in terms of the area’s tourism profile as a high proportion relates to the day visitor market and accommodation spend is low.

3.3 Moving Forward: Sussex Tourism

A new destination management model, developed and administered by VisitEngland, is reshaping destination management and providing a drive towards regional collaboration and partnership working. Operating at a regional destination focus, the new Local Visitor Economy Partnerships aim to reduce fragmentation and bring coherence to destination management and development. In parallel with the changing support infrastructure, the Sussex Visitor Economy Initiative (SVEI) was established by East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council in September 2020 initially in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The strategic partnership is working with public and private sector partners to harness the opportunities that cross-county collaboration brings to supporting sector recovery, resilience and growth, and to raising the profile of Sussex as a national and international visitor destination.

Table 8: Sussex Visitor Economy Growth Targets to 2030

	2019 Value	2030 Value	Estimated Impact (not factoring inflation)
Overseas Visitors			
Increase number of overseas visitors by 33%	1.5m	2.0m	+\$275 million
Increase spend per night to £88 (England average £98)	£55	£88	+\$650 million
UK Staying Visitors			
Increase average length of stay to England average	2.57	2.98	+\$475 million
Increase number of domestic staying trips by 1/3	5.5m	7.33m	+\$400 million
Day Visitors			
Increase spend per day to £33.50 (England average £37.09)	£31	£33.50	+\$200 million
			+\$2,000 million

Source: Blue Sail Sussex & Brighton & Hove Visitor Economy Baseline, August 2023

Sussex is home to a vibrant creative and cultural sector, encompassing a wide range of sub-sectors including music, venue, theatres and live events. A destination audit⁶ for Sussex focussed on the distinctive features that Sussex offers as a visitor destination. These ‘signature experiences’, with their associated ‘star’ products include a number of ‘products’; within 1066 Country (as highlighted in bold):

- Brighton & Hove – Brighton Pier, the Lanes, Royal Pavilion, Brighton and Hove Museums, Brighton Beach, Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club, i360, Sussex County Cricket Club.
- Sussex coast – Beachy Head, Seven Sisters, **Camber Sands**, West Wittering Beach, Chichester Harbour.
- Sussex countryside – South Downs National Park, Devil’s Dyke.
- Sussex historical towns – **Hastings Old Town**, **Battle**, **Rye**, Lewes, Arundel, Chichester
- Sussex vineyards – Tinwood Estate Vineyard, Albourne Estate, Bolney Wine Estate, **Rathfinny Wine Estate**, Ridgeview.
- Sussex gardens – Nymans, Wakehurst, Sheffield Park and Garden.
- Heritage attractions – Arundel Castle, **1066 Battle Abbey and Battlefield**, Petworth House, Fishbourne Roman Palace, Bluebell Railway.
- Performing arts & festivals – Glyndebourne, Chichester Festival Theatre, Goodwood Revival, Goodwood Festival of Speed, Great Escape Festival, Brighton Festival, Brighton Fringe, Brighton Pride, Charleston, **De La Warr Pavilion**.

There are other significant experiences in 1066 Country that attract and retain visitors and which align to these themes. These include Bodiam Castle, Pevensey Castle, Drusilla’s Park, Knock hatch, Michelham Priory, Great Dixter House and Gardens, Batemans, Herstmonceux Castle, Pashley Manor Gardens. The burgeoning vineyard scene is also strongly represented in 1066 Country with Sedlescombe, Oastbrook, Carr Taylor, Oxney, Tillingham and Charles Palmer all offering the chance to explore the flavours of this part of the world.

As a result of the collaborative work through the Sussex Visitor Economy Initiative, a decision has recently been taken to establish Experience Sussex with support from East and West Sussex County Councils and which will replace Experience West Sussex in the west of the region. This new organisation has secured 2 year County Council funding, its exact roles and functions are yet to be established however, it is keen to support local DMOs and district/borough council tourism activity.

Experience Sussex and VisitBrighton have made a joint application to VisitEngland for a partnership LVEP, which has recently been approved. It is possible that 1066 Country may choose to collaborate with Experience Sussex where it makes sense but should not look to the LVEP as a source of funding, as this seems unlikely.

⁶ Visitor Economy Initiative: Baseline Report Blue Sail August 2023

Though all still to be worked through, in terms of marketing approach by the different organisations in Sussex, clarity might be achieved by thinking about who will do what at different stages of the visitor journey. An example of how this might work could be as below:



This is considered further in the options assessment.

3.4 Tourism Trends

It will be important that 1066 Country responds to market trends and changes in consumer behaviours, particularly as the sector continues to recover following the pandemic. Globally, the economy is in uncertain times, still in recovery from the pandemic and now facing a major geopolitical shock with the war in Ukraine. This is causing severe economic shortages of raw materials and supply-chain challenges which has led to soaring food and fuel costs, high inflation and a cost-of-living crisis. Based on national research and forecasting, some of these trends include:

- Growing environmental awareness and interest in responsible travel with benefits for coastal and rural regions such as 1066 Country
- A move towards localism and the unique identity of a destination as well as a desire to “discover what’s on your doorstep” which includes the unique history and heritage of 1066 Country as well as the more contemporary food, drink and culture scene
- Pet friendly travel
- The rise of ‘work-and-play-cations’ – people choosing temporary locations for ‘work from home’

- An appreciation of the outdoors and a growing thirst for adventure, experience and something different. Active holidays may be on the rise, but this can create hotspots and overcrowding alongside impacting on host communities and which needs managing
- Value for money plays an important role in choosing a destination. 'Great value for money' continues to be an increasingly important destination influence for domestic holidays/short breaks. This is especially true in the current cost of living crisis.
- The pandemic increased the use of digital technology in many aspects of our lives including in hospitality and tourism. Fast, reliable internet connectivity is expected and online booking for attractions, restaurants etc. has now been normalised. This is leading to a shift from printed marketing to digital marketing.
- Global conflicts are causing price fluctuations, lower consumer confidence and altering markets with an impact on global tourism.

4. Consultation and Engagement

4.1 1066 Country Member Survey Findings

In preparing the new Business Plan and to ensure that it is fully owned by partners and meets the needs of members, the 1066 Country Executive Board issued an on-line survey to all of its 164 members in January 2024. The following provides a summary of the survey findings and the full survey results are attached at Appendix 1.

Existing 1066 Country Services

When asked which of the 1066 Country services members had used (directly or indirectly) since joining, the four highest responses were received for:

- Consumer marketing (22 or 73%)
- Networking events (13 or 43%)
- Online press (13 or 43%)
- Printed press (12 or 40%)

Key Challenges

When asked what the key challenges members face that they believe 1066 Country marketing could help with, the key areas included:

- Regional brand awareness and attracting overseas guests
- Accessing media and PR opportunities
- Help to drive business in the quieter months
- Sharing new campaign and events across multimedia platforms
- Help / training / workshops with merging social media technology development
- Reaching new audiences and bringing people to 1066 Country
- Driving footfall, information sharing / best practice

Business Plan Priority Services

When asked to prioritise the eleven 1066 Country services for the new Business Plan, the top four were listed as:

- Consumer marketing and area promotion
- Media engagement
- Travel trade and group marketing
- Online press

4.2 Stakeholder Consultation

In addition to the member's survey, the Business Plan has been informed by a series of consultation meetings held with Local Authority representatives and members of the 1066 Country Executive Board. A summary of these consultations against key themes is summarised below:

Core Challenges

- Withdraw of Hasting Borough Council funding has had a significant impact on the ability to fully deliver 1066 Country's objectives. However, it has created an opportunity to re-assess and re-evaluate where 1066 County is and what its future core missions, values and objectives should be. This is seen as an opportunity to re-structure the 1066 County offer.
- The market challenge is how to attract more, and the right type of visitors that can provide the maximum economic benefit for localities. Could 1066 Country be more aggressive in its approach on staycations and attracting international visitors; and in having a clearly defined reach and target market?
- The destination management 'infrastructure' is complex including the emerging Sussex LVEP and other destination marketing partnerships like Sussex Modern.
- There is a risk that the area lacks a coherent overall vision for its visitor economy, particularly given growing competition and the proactive work of Experience West Sussex with localities to the west.
- Key strategic parts of the offer need to be more coherent and joined up, e.g. the ancient woodland brand "Weald" is less well known but is as beautiful as the 'Downs' or Kent – the garden of England.
- The accommodation stock is small and dominated by Airbnb's. This makes it difficult for the area to encourage longer stays.
- The funding for smaller events programmes is under threat from reduced external funding opportunities e.g. Arts Council funding.
- There is a challenge to maintaining existing members and growing new ones.
- There is a concern that the sovereignty of the 1066 Country brand is diminished with Hastings BC not investing.

Business Plan Priorities

- Securing additional external funding, sponsorship and membership funding. Bringing HBC back into the funding mix.
- Developing a robust evidence base for membership and to help attract new members.
- Re-focusing and re-assessing 1066 Country identity and objectives to ensure there is a unique offer in place.
- Maximising the value of every £ spent.

- Looking at successful examples elsewhere where destinations have changed their priorities (see below on successes).
- Making more of the prime rural and historic offer in the area.
- Maximising the opportunities that the £2 million per year Long-Term Plan Town Funding has to offer.
- Building on the opportunities of the agricultural sector and local regional offer.
- Building on and maximising the opportunities and success of the viticulture offer in the region.
- Moving the organisation to become more commercially focussed.
- Putting in place mechanisms to better monitor and evaluate core activities to present to members.

Destination Marketing

- Working closely with English Heritage and the National Trust to align with their marketing budgets and reach, for example English Heritage is particularly relevant for Wealden with Pevensey Castle in the District, and a key attraction to the 1066 Country story with Battle Abbey in Battle.

Membership Services

- Increasing membership fees could be an option but it might be a hard sell unless 1066 Country can specifically evidence its positive impact for its members. A phased approach was proposed so as not to look like a direct knee jerk reaction to Hastings BC withdrawal.
- It was reported that some members will have no perception that 1066 Country is helping to drive business and economic activity.
- 1066 Country does not do enough to inform members on activities and impact. It was reported that some businesses might think that '1066 Country is the tourist board run by the local authority'.
- In general, it was reported that 1066 Country membership did provide value for money for local businesses.
- Those businesses that do engage well and / or agree to host events etc do benefit more from the press / PR coverage.....'*engage more to benefit more*'

Future Governance

- A governance review is recommended with a priority to make the Executive Board more business/ sector led.
- A desire to secure Board members who represent their locality or sector but who also own their own tourism businesses.
- Maintain independence and avoid any future political pressure to ensure the Board is genuinely business-led.

- A concern was raised that the area's arts and cultural sector has representatives on the board which may be needed for other sectors.
- A desire for every Board representative to be an active participant in each meeting.
- A request to see more businesses rather than business representative organisations on the Board.
- Need for SMEs and viticulture on the Board.
- Consider sectoral representatives rather than geographical ones.

What Does Success Look Like?

- Securing additional revenue streams and members.
- Move away from being local authority led towards becoming a business-led partnership for the 1066 area.
- Being able to demonstrate the value of 1066 Country to elected members for their continued funding support.

Other Comments

- By far the biggest accommodation providers in the area are the Caravan / Lodge Parks yet it was reported that 1066 Country has virtually no relationship with them. Could they be more than just members and be considered as "partners" or sponsors.
- Is there an opportunity for 1066 Country to engage more effectively with coach companies and rail operators?
- Commercial sponsorship could be explored more.

Consultation takeaways

Discussions with stakeholders and responses to the member survey demonstrates a strong commitment to 1066 Country. The organisation needs to continue its focus on destination marketing to promote the area, support members and strengthen 1066 Country's brand nationally and internationally.

The general feeling is that the organisation punches way above its weight in terms of the resources at its disposal. This is mainly due to the commitment, enthusiasm and professionalism of its staff.

However, 1066 Country needs to engage more effectively with members in terms of responding to their needs as well as demonstrating success and impact through its activities.

The withdrawal of Hastings Borough Council is a concern but does provide an opportunity to reevaluate and reposition the organisation. Of more concern is the over-reliance on public sector funding and the uncertainty caused by changes to the destination marketing landscape particularly at a sub-regional level.

5. Benchmarking

5.1 Benchmarking Comparators

An important component of the Business Plan has been to understand how other destinations management organisations are managing and developing the tourism profile of individual destinations, particularly in terms of addressing challenges and opportunities.

Historically tourism activity in DMOs is supported by the public and private sector. The private sector whether through campaign investment or membership is largely concerned with marketing and sales activity. In most destinations, investment from the public sector is often focussed on destination management and destination development type priorities (e.g. sustainability, training, inward investment).

In practice each destination is different and there is often a blurring between sources of income and how/where it is spent. Pressures on public sector finance make it challenging to identify new revenue funding for DMO priorities although most destinations still maintain a level of support from local authorities that is often used to lever investment from business.

The attached table sets out a number of destinations, which for comparison are based on destination areas that have (in most instances) a similar profile to 1066 Country in terms of market recognition and overnight trips. Clearly, it is not straightforward to compare and contrast DMOs as there are different governance and funding models in place. The situation in Visit Eastbourne perhaps best demonstrates this, where there are posts split across Lewes and Eastbourne and separate teams for events, the seafront and a dedicated marketing team for the venues. The majority of funding at Visit Eastbourne is from the local authority.

The table and comparators highlight shows that 1066 Country is performing well in spite of lower levels of resources in terms of funds and staffing.

Destination	What known for	DMO	Description	Overnight Trips	Financial Resources	Staffing
1066 Country	1066 Norman Invasion	visit1066country.com	Public private partnership	830k	£120,537 (core: £57k LA /£30k Membership)	1.3 FTE
Torbay	English Riviera	English Riviera BID Co.	BID Company (Ltd. by guarantee)	762k	Approx £700k (£600k bid levy + £100k grants, sponsorship)	6-8 FTE (inc. casuals for VIC)
County Durham	World Heritage Site/ University	Visit County Durham	Arms length co. ltd by guarantee. Main investor is county council.	815k	£750k (inc. £50k partnership income)	14 FTE
Test Valley	R. Test and birthplace of fly fishing	Visit Test Valley	Local Authority Department (TSE contracted services)	161k	£156k (all from the borough council)	3 FTE (TIC & King John House)
Visit Eastbourne	Traditional seaside	Visit Eastbourne	Local authority department	271k	£450k approx. £250k marketing, £100k TIC + other staff/on costs (majority from the LA)	2.5 FTE (inc 2 marketing staff)
Shakespeare's England	Shakespeare and Stratford/Warwick	Shakespeare's England	Company limited by guarantee. Non-profit objectives.	818k	Approx £275-300k. £100k from each of the 2 district councils plus £100k business partners (2 tiers plus free web listing)	5 roles (approx. 3.5FTE)

Data source: <https://www.visitbritain.org/research-insights/england-domestic-overnight-trips-and-day-visits-subnational-data>

The De Bois review of DMOs, published in 2021, highlighted the variation in budgets and funding sources across DMOs in England. It found that across all DMOs, the median income was just under £200,000 with a mean of just over £400,000 and 29% of DMOs had budgets of over £0.5m. It is important to note that the survey included many small and/or district level DMOs, so these are comparable to 1066 Country.

From this, it is possible to draw out lessons which may be applicable for the development of 1066 Country moving forward. Using our experience of working with similar DMOs, we have identified a range of issues for consideration.

5.2 Summary

Organisation

- Developing strong and effective working partnerships between all organisations and businesses involved in tourism is critical.
- Putting in place effective mechanisms to secure strong representation from businesses to provide a 'voice' as well as a coordinating 'platform' for the visitor economy sector and related companies. Without the backing and trust of tourism businesses, implementation and change can be difficult.
- Most local DMOs have strong support and commitment from the local authority alongside membership services.
- DMOs often create internal groupings to reflect the range of interests of the membership and extent of activities undertaken. This can include for example sub-divisions by product sectors (accommodation, retail, catering etc) and / or by theme (branding, the Customer Experience, Industry Partnerships). This needs to be carefully structured to ensure plans are cost effective and efficiently delivered.
- There is a benefit derived by making sure the organisation is lean and agile – able to be more responsive and freer of political influence.

Marketing

- Prioritising and targeting visitor markets is important both in terms of effectively using limited resources and building on tourism assets. Visitors need a reason to

choose a destination over other destinations. Strengthening visitors' awareness through a strong brand position is seen as being key.

- The Business Plan needs to be a 'live document', available on the appropriate website alongside relevant (updateable) printed material.
- It is important to update the imagery used – with a focus of aspirational photographs which are attractive to users, including people and night-time images.
- A number of the DMOs are developing projects and campaigns to convert day visitors into staying visitors specifically through packaging products and developing creative itinerary planning (e.g. area gift card scheme).

Product development

- Some DMOs involve themselves in the tourism product, mainly with lobbying, research intelligence and planning support.
- Supporting and facilitating event programmes can play an important role in marketing and raising the profile of the area. Events help to create a vibrancy and buzz about the area and act as a hook to draw people in.

6. Summary SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brand awareness ▪ Outstanding service delivered by dedicated team ▪ Rich history and heritage ▪ High-quality signature attractions / venues, e.g. Battle Abbey, De La Warr Pavilion, Pevensey Castle, Knockhatch ▪ Developing high-value products, e.g. viticulture, cultural products ▪ Local produce ▪ Unique landscape; High Weald ▪ Strongly performing destination website ▪ Retention of membership year on year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of a coherent vision ▪ Limited resources to extend activities ▪ Withdrawal of support from Hastings Borough Council ▪ Lack of visitor intelligence ▪ Limited / ad hoc digital marketing ▪ Day visitor dominates ▪ Limited accommodation stock ▪ Seasonality ▪ Lack of visitor profile data to the 1066 area ▪ Limited private sector investment
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tourism trends post C-19 – visitors looking for new, attractive outdoor space ▪ Sustainable / green tourism ▪ Green infrastructure and linkages – developing walking and cycling trails ▪ Growth of 1066 as a mini-break destination, e.g. Powdermills ▪ Planned Town Centre improvements and Long-Term Plan Town investment plans, particularly in Bexhill and Hastings* ▪ UKSPF funding ▪ Return of Hastings BC to the partnership ▪ Collaborative partnership working (LVEP, Experience Sussex, other District and Borough's in East Sussex) <p>*currently paused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of funding to deliver marketing ▪ Cost of living affecting visitor markets and investors ▪ Continued gaps in product offer, particularly limited accommodation base ▪ Growth of competing DMOs. ▪ Underselling of the areas uniqueness and distinctiveness ▪ Lack of collaboration and partnership working ▪ Loss of Hastings members if Hastings Borough Council does not return as a funding partner

7. 1066 Country: Moving Forward

The visitor economy is important to 1066 Country. The headline figures show positive growth driven mostly by an increase in day visitors to the area. In excess of £37.6 million is spent on average in the 1066 Country economy every month generated by visitor activity (2022). However, this is over £11 million less than in 2019, which indicates that further interventions are needed to support the sector get back to pre-pandemic levels in terms of volume and value. *(data from 2022 TSE Economic Impact)*

The Business Plan needs to set out a clear direction of travel in terms of the strategic and operational responsibilities and priorities of 1066 Country, its Executive Board and team. We know that only well-managed, distinctive destinations who can communicate clear and compelling messages to their target audience will deliver growth and success.

There are a number of issues facing the organisation moving forward:

- Slower recovery post-pandemic exacerbated by global conflict
- Limited funding and capacity
- Uncertainty regarding future local authority funding support
- Uncertainty regarding the destination marketing landscape in Sussex

The Business Plan sets out a two-phased approach.

Phase 1: 2024/25 ‘Consolidate’

The secured funding in 2024/25 year will enable 1066 Country to consolidate and continue to deliver a range of destination marketing activities to continue to position 1066 Country as a premier visitor destination, coordinating and leading the business community in the area. Post Covid, the challenge is to grow the sector towards historic 2019 impacts as well as driving private sector investment to improve the product and destination experience.

The key action areas are:

STRATEGY	DESTINATION MARKETING	ENGAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vision ▪ Leadership and coordination ▪ Evidence and intelligence ▪ Lobbying and positioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Campaigns ▪ Digital content ▪ Communications and PR ▪ Marketing tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member services ▪ Networking ▪ Business engagement and development

Further information is set out in section 8 (Action Plan).

Phase 2: 2025 – onwards ‘Thrive & Grow’

The Business Plan needs to set out a direction of travel for 1066 Country to be agile, resilient and financially stable with an ability to deliver a range of effective services and campaigns that grow the visitor economy in the area. A core emphasis is on increasing private sector investment to maintain and grow the partnership.

A number of options have been considered, which are outlined below.

Option 1: Re-focus 1066 Country towards member growth	
Description	
Re-focused DMO, with an emphasis on strengthening member services and securing additional funding to offset reliance on local authority funding, whilst continuing to offer a strong marketing and promotion service.	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retains strong brand ▪ Business confidence amongst members ▪ Builds on existing strength and opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of resources / capacity without active local authority’s involvement ▪ Dependent on securing additional income ▪ Limited marketing and promotional activities
Commentary	
<p>The option is dependent on securing new income. Funding scenarios and programmes regularly change, so should be kept under review with sufficient flexibility to respond to any new funding opportunities that arise, e.g. new round of UKSPF. New funding streams that can build upon existing local authority and private sector funding to ensure that the organisation is sufficiently resourced will need to be identified.</p> <p>Having established itself as the lead organisation for destination marketing, there may be potential for 1066 Country to apply for funding support from the emerging Bexhill-on-Sea and Hastings Long-Term Plan Town Boards although development of the boards and Investment priorities are at an early stage.</p> <p>Additional external funding would allow 1066 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue, and build upon the marketing campaigns being delivered ○ Better signposting to business growth opportunities. ○ Develop better engagement with members getting key messages out to members. 	

- Look at how links with external organisations and stakeholders might be used to better promote 1066 Country within the Sussex offer.

Option 2: Commissioned service offered to another provider	
Description	
Open or closed procurement exercise to commission an operator/provider to run the service under contract with performance targets and milestones.	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential to share risk and achieve value for money and efficiencies ▪ Reduced overheads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Still reliant on a level of local authority funding ▪ Could potentially result in reduced service ▪ Uncertainty regarding market interest ▪ Reduced control ▪ Potential TUPE implications
Commentary	
One option would be procuring a provider to deliver the service under contract with agreed targets and outcomes and enabling 1066 to access existing skills and resources in research, marketing, training etc.	

Option 3: Re-designed local DMO with more involvement from the private sector / potential shared back office and or services with other Sussex DMOs	
Description	
This is an extension of Option 1 but with an additional focus on sharing back-office functions and services with other DMOs in Sussex, specifically with other East Sussex DMOs and newly emerging pan Sussex organisations.	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential cost savings, e.g. website hosting and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further engagement needed by LA partners to identify potential interest

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity to combine staffing budgets to make more focused job roles ▪ Opportunities for enhanced sub-regional thematic campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential loss of control ▪ Uncertainty as to level of cost savings ▪ Combining very different DMO offers will be challenging
<p>Commentary</p> <p>The changing destination management ecosystem at a sub-regional level could provide an opportunity for 1066 Country to work more closely with Visit Lewes, Visit Eastbourne and Explore Wealden, including sharing some back-office functions and services as well as exploring other areas for collaboration.</p> <p>It should be remembered that not all the DMOs are membership based and these different models could be difficult to standardize.</p> <p>An in-depth local knowledge is a key element of a local DMO which needs to be retained.</p>	

<p>Option 4: Free base-level of membership</p>	
<p>Description</p> <p>Make 1066 Country a tourism partnership that allows all tourism business in the area to participate without membership fees.</p>	
<p>Pros</p>	<p>Cons</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The tourism offer for the area will be all inclusive ▪ Tiered add-ons would allow to provide continued income ▪ Would allow easier back-office integration with other local DMOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reliant on a higher level of Local Authority, or other long term grant funding ▪ With greater numbers involved the workload would increase requiring more staff resource
<p>Commentary</p> <p>A free membership level could be considered with paid add-on options, to allow all tourism businesses to be included in the 1066 offer but to allow a degree of revenue from additional support. This would require a continuous level of grant investment to cover the lost income.</p>	

Option 5: Managed close-down	
Description Manage the close-down of 1066 Country as a local DMO during 2024/25 in light of continued decline in public sector funding. The assumption would be that the developing sub-regional partners (Experience Sussex, Sussex Modern etc.) would provide destination marketing for the region.	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No call on local authority investment to the 1066 Partnership • Managed closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognised and regarded as an effective DMO • Potential demise of 1066 Country as a destination brand • Impact on membership and service offer • Experience Sussex funding only secured for the next 2 years so no guarantee of support beyond • No local tourism offer
Commentary The member survey demonstrates a significant regard for 1066 Country as a destination partnership. This would seem an extreme option, which would have a significant impact on the visitor economy in the region.	

Regardless of which operational model is taken forward, the new Local Visitor Economy Partnership and evolving Experience Sussex model, will mean that 1066 Country will need to align its operations within the new infrastructure. It may choose to formally collaborate with Experience Sussex where it makes sense, but it should not look to the LVEP as a source of funding, as this seems unlikely. Though all to be worked through, it will be important for 1066 Country to position itself (and its members) to work ‘within the grain’ and be acknowledged as a strong, distinct destination partnership and brand.

An Options Assessment process (Appendix 2), agreed by the Board, has identified a blend of Option 1 and 3 as providing the preferred way forward. 1066 Country has an established brand and is punching well-above its weight in terms of services and impact. Discussions with East Sussex partners including Visit Eastbourne confirm a willingness to explore greater formal collaboration both in terms of securing economies of scale, in building on areas of expertise and sharing back-office costs.

Given how many of these external structures are in flux, it will take a bit of time to work out exactly how, and in what way, 1066 Country can best align and collaborate.

8. Future Governance

In developing the Business Plan, a review of the Executive Board's constitution (dated 2013) has been undertaken to consider its effectiveness in helping to deliver the Plan's key objectives. This review has also included an assessment of other Destination Management Organisations terms of reference across the UK.

The organisation, specifically the Executive Team, is restricted by its limited capacity and resources to function as a local DMO. An important feature of the revised Constitution is to ensure that the Executive Board plays its role to support delivery of the Business Plan.

On approval of the Business Plan, it is proposed to seek the Executive Board's approval to implement a new constitution Appendix 1.

9. Action Plan

The Business Plan and consultation confirm that tourism matters for 1066 Country; it is a growing sector which makes an important contribution to overall economic growth. It will be important that 1066 Country prepares an Annual Action Plan to inform members of its proposed activities.

9.1 3 Year Action Plan

The tables below outline a number of priority Action Areas for consideration by the Board as the organisation moves forward.

Year 1: 2024-25 (Consolidation Year)

Year 2: 2025-26

Year 3: 2026-27

Governance, Partnership and Collaboration				
Action	Who needs to be involved	Lead	Timeframe	Completed by
Establish and agree revised constitution for 1066 Country Executive Board	Exec Board	LA	Yr 1	Sept 24
Election of Exec Board to fit with new Constitution	Exec Board	Chair	Yr 1	March 25

Instigate formal discussions with neighbouring DMOs to consider areas for future collaboration	Local Authorities	LA	Yr 1	March 25
Draw up a 2024 Action Plan and annual budget for the remainder of the year	Accountable Body/ Exec Board	RDC	Yr 1	August 24
Establish a 1066 Country Members Services Group (task-finish group) to reprofile and relaunch service to members, including considering increasing subscriptions in line with similar DMOs.	1066 Country – Board reps / LA	To be agreed	Yr 1	Jan 25
Ensure 1066 Country has representation on the evolving work of Experience Sussex	1066 Country	Chair	Yr 1,2 3	On-going
New area reps to organise and deliver meetings with area members.	Exec Board	Area Reps	Yr 2	On-going
Annual survey to members to gage summer season.	Exec Team		Yr 2	
Ensure strong officer representation for the local visitor economy sector within Long Term Plan for Town Boards in Hastings and Bexhill .	LA / Area Reps	RDC / HBC	Year 1	On-going

Marketing and Promotion

1066 Country is currently developing its marketing and promotional programme for delivery in 2024/25 but also need to look ahead to meet member needs.

Action	Who needs to be involved	Lead	Timeframe	Completed by
Continue to promote 1066 Country to its core target markets, i.e. families and cultural explorers	1066 Country	Short – Medium		

Develop itineraries and packages specifically tailored to core target markets including Country-Loving Traditionalists’ and ‘Aspirational Family Fun’.	1066 Country	Short – Medium		
Strengthen links with neighbouring destinations and attractions for mutually beneficial collaboration and itinerary packaging (e.g. rural escapes and coastal retreats).	1066 Country	Short – Medium		
Deliver familiarisation visits for trade and group organisers to get them to into the area.	1066 Country	Short – Medium		
Provide appropriate content to key visitor websites (e.g. Experience Sussex) to ensure it is inspiring, concise and targeted with appealing, energetic content and imagery. Ensure key tourism websites link to 1066 website for local information.	1066 Country	On-going		
Undertake social media campaigns to gain coverage in national and regional titles to raise awareness of the destination, the new developments and activities.	1066 Country	On-going	July 24	Jane

Business Engagement – product development

The product offer is a core component of the ‘destination.’ With reduced resources, 1066 Country has played a minor role in identifying and supporting the development of existing and new products and services that add to the offer. However, it is important that 1066 Country continues to develop new tourism products and offers that meet new and emerging visitor aspirations.

Action	Who needs to be involved	Lead	Timeframe	Completed by
Develop and support a regular programme of engagement with member tourism businesses in 1066 Country in its spatial areas.	1066 Country – Exec Board		Yr 2	
Develop a programme of training opportunities to support member businesses to grow.	1066 Country – Exec Board		Yr 3	
Regular area meeting networking meetings	1066 Country – Exec Board	Area Reps	Yr 2	
Incentivise and prioritise tourism products that deliver a sustainable offer particularly through existing pre funded business support programmes	1066 Country members	Ongoing	Yr 1,2	ongoing
Promote sustainable tourism packages to develop a reputation for the area.	1066 Country – Exec Board		Yr3	
Identify regular moments in the year for business feedback – sector health check	1066 Country – Exec Board		Yr2	

9.2 Resource Plan / Budget

The Resource Plan outlines an indicative income and expenditure profile for 1066 Country for the next three years. Year 1 is based on the current budget profile for 2024/25. It is a challenging funding environment, particularly given the budget deficit that 1066 Country is already facing and the fact that the 2024/25 budget includes a significant carry-forward of £25,000+ from the previous year.

The aim is to build financial resilience over the next three years whilst enabling the organisation to enhance its marketing and campaign activities and support to members. The Resource Plan is dependent on a significant injection of funding, possibly from both the Hastings and Bexhill Long-Term Plans or other external grant funding, as well as an increase in membership income and securing a small amount of income from sponsorship and CRS activities (something that has been successfully achieved by other DMOs).

A strong case can be made to both the **Bexhill and Hastings LTP Boards** for funding support. The on-menu interventions included within government guidance include specific actions to support and grow the visitor economy:

'H6: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area.

- *Campaigns promoting the local area and its culture, heritage, leisure and visitor offer to residents and visitors;*
- *Campaigns to encourage visitors from further afield to visit and stay in the region, collaborating with other places where appropriate.'*

1066 Country will need to develop a robust proposition to both Boards for funding to deliver against these priority interventions.

1066 Country: Indicative Resource Plan			
INCOME			
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
RDC grant	50,000	50,000	50,000
WDC grant	7,000	7,000	7,000
Membership	24,420	28,083	32,295
Bexhill LTP ⁷		30,000	30,000
Hastings LTP		50,000	50,000
UKSPF	15,000		
Sponsorship and CSR ⁸		5,000	15,000
Others	25,277 ⁹		
Total	121,697	163,083	184,295

EXPENDITURE			
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Staffing Salaries	54,028	56,729	59,565
Marketing	30,864	61,594	72,382
Hired and contracted service	39,445	35,000	40,000
Subscriptions	6,300	6,615	6,946

⁷ On pause

⁸ Corporate Social Responsibility

⁹ Carry forward

Misc	4,900	5,145	5,402
	135,537	165,083	184,295
Balance	-(£13,840)	(£0)	(£0)

9.3 Next Steps

The Business Plan sets out a refreshed direction of travel for the 1066 Country in terms of structure, priority actions and resourcing. The research and consultation demonstrates strong support for the organisation to drive the growth and development of the visitor economy. 1066 Country has a clear role in facilitating, co-ordinating and delivering activities to increase the total numbers of visitors and grow visitor spend. It is dependent on securing significant additional resources from Hastings and Bexhill Town Boards, along with identifying other funding opportunities but the organisation is well-placed to secure the additional funding to support projects giving its achievements to date and ambitions for the future.

APPENDIX 1: Member Survey Results:

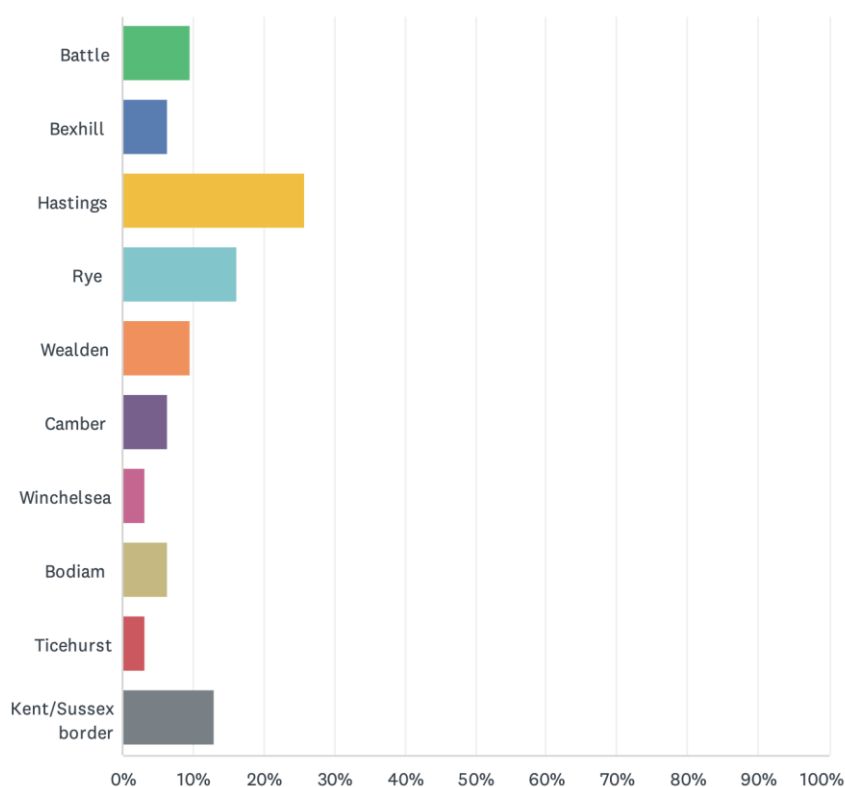
Member Profile

Of the 164 1066 County members, 32 (20%) completed the on-line survey, of which 16 (50%) held Gold membership; 8 (25%) Silver membership; and 8 (25%) Bronze membership.

The vast majority of respondents (29 or 90%) reported that they had been trading in the area for three years or more; and 26 (81%) respondents reported that they had been a member of 1066 Country for three years or more.

The majority of respondents (20 or 63%) have never attended a 1066 Country AGM, though a quarter (8 or 25%) reported that they had more than once.

There was an even spread of geographical response across the 1066 County area, with the highest response from members in the Hastings area (8 or 25%).



In terms of business profile, visitor attractions were the highest respondents (9 or 28%), followed by self-service accommodation (5 or 16%). A quarter of respondents replied with an alternative nature of their business as:

- Agriculture/micro farming
- Could only select one - also have self-catering (sleep 28 in total)
- Pub, restaurant, rooms

- Museum
- Watersports and Ebike Hire
- Museum of Local History
- Cafe, retail, camping and Self catering
- Amusement Arcade

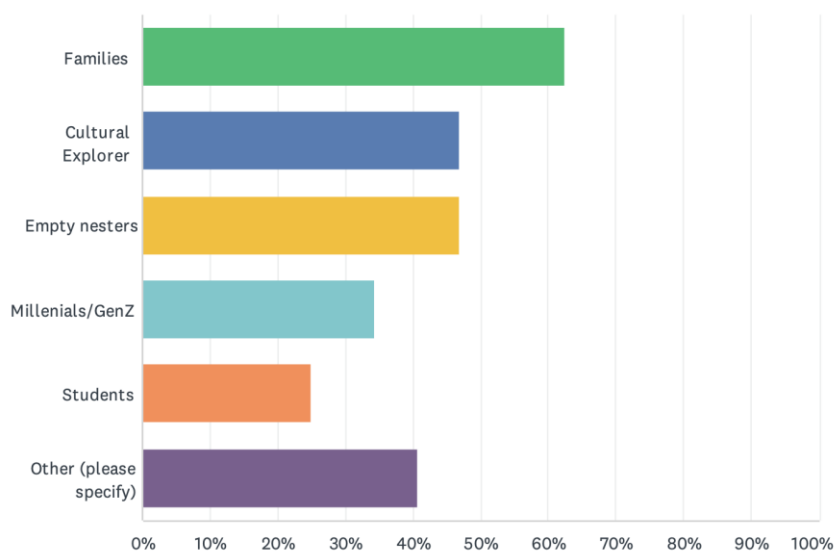
Key Challenges

When asked what the key challenges members face that they believe 1066 Country marketing could help with, the key areas included:

- Regional brand awareness and attracting overseas guests
- Accessing media and PR opportunities
- Help to drive business in the quieter months
- Sharing new campaign and events across multimedia platforms
- Help / training / workshops with merging social media technology development
- Reaching new audiences and bringing people to 1066 Country
- Driving footfall, information sharing / best practice

Target Markets and Customer Demographic

Over half (20 or 63%) respondents stated that Families were their target market or customer demographic. The other responses are set out in the chart below:



The 'other' responses included:

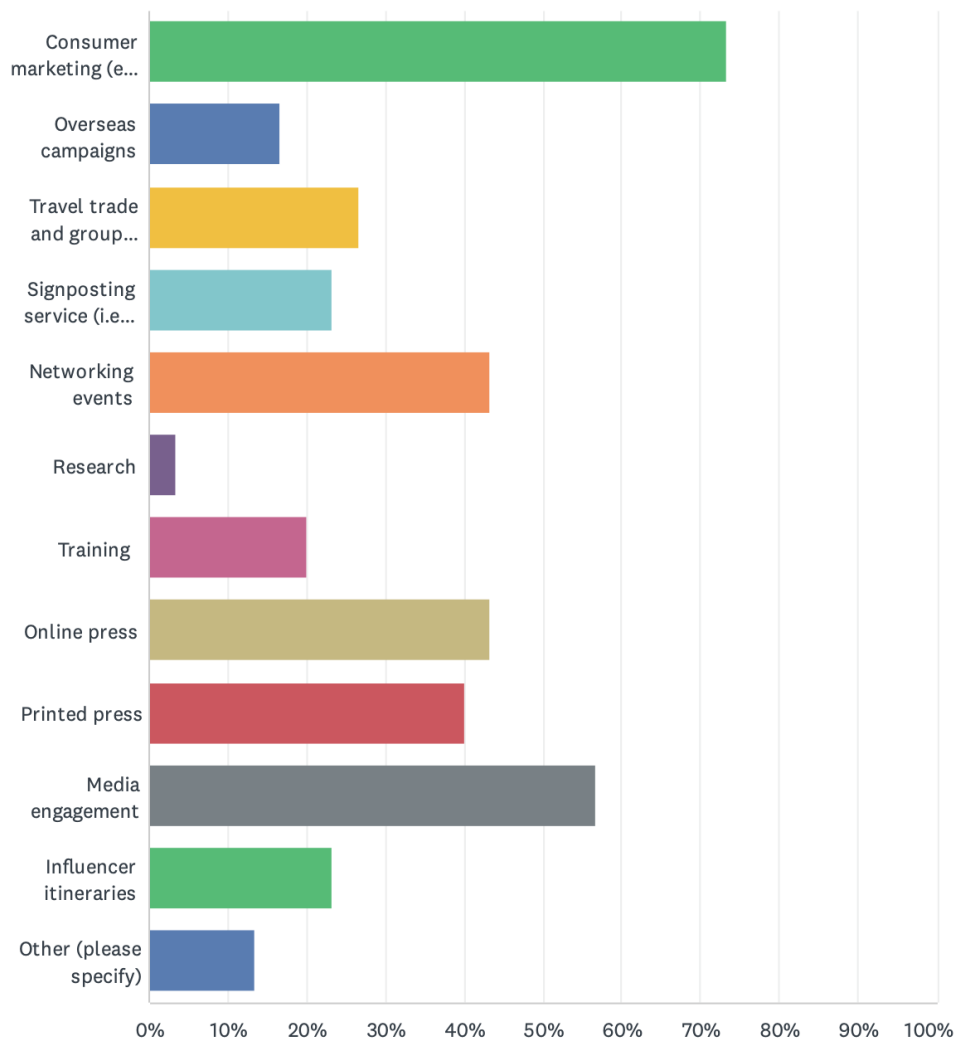
- Anyone with an interest in local history
- Young couples, solo travelers
- Ideally groups UK based or International
- 3 generational families

- There's no attraction here for children (no playground, activity sheets etc.) but we get some visitors with younger children who like gardens, flowers, ducks etc.
- Educational groups & societies
- Groups of friends
- Mostly professionals from late 20's to late 40's
- Affluent couples of all ages
- Academics / Astronomers

Existing 1066 Country Services

When asked which of the 1066 Country services members had used (directly or indirectly) since joining, the four highest responses were received for:

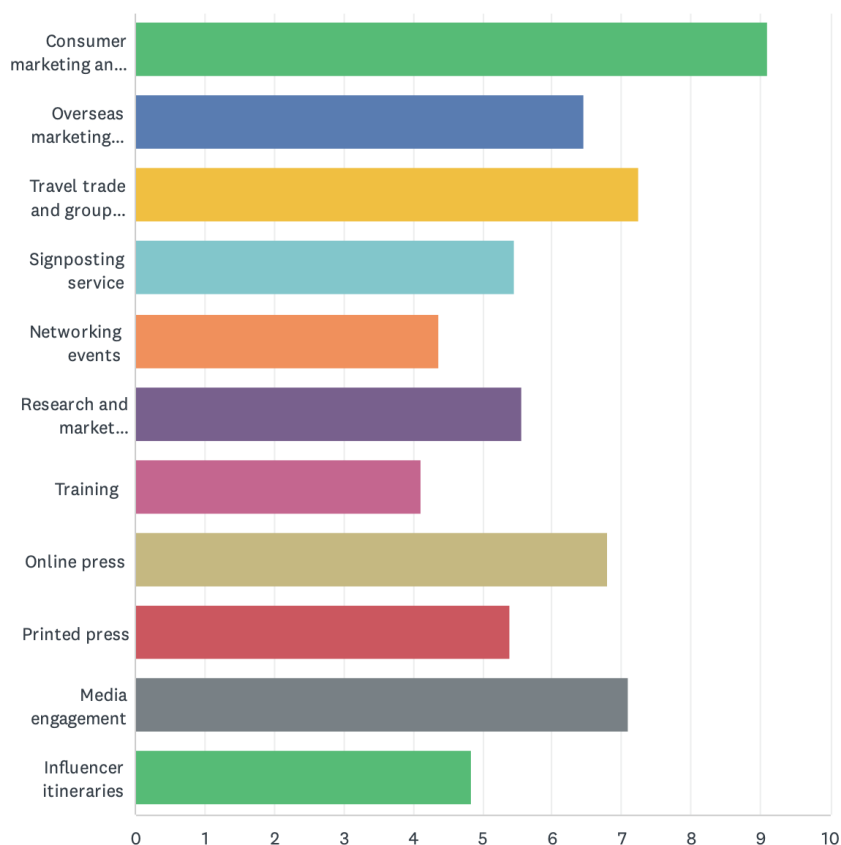
- Consumer marketing (22 or 73%)
- Networking events (13 or 43%)
- Online press (13 or 43%)
- Printed press (12 or 40%)



Business Plan Priority Services

When asked to prioritise the eleven 1066 Country services for the new Business Plan, the top four were listed as:

5. Consumer marketing and area promotion
6. Media engagement
7. Travel trade and group marketing
8. Online press

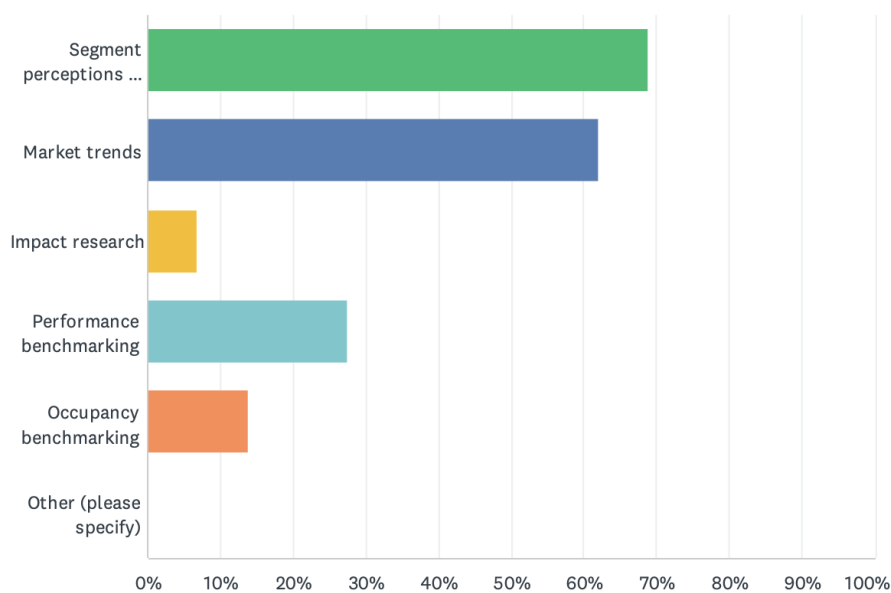


When asked of specific services or resources members would like 1066 Country to provide, the following were reported:

- I'd welcome a 'menu' of add-ons to my membership that I could pay additional fee for e.g. influencer visits that are out of my budget as a standalone business but in collaboration with other members and handled by 1066 might be accessible
- More the amazing support I received recently putting me in touch with another useful dept of the RDC
- Regular advertising opportunities and highlighted mentions on social media. Also more marketing shared to other businesses and publications in the area.
- The ones you already provide - keep up the good work thank you!

- Marketing advice
- Insights into the best tools for marketing
- Campaigns
- Television commercial
- A digital discovery map

In terms of visitor insights that would be most valuable to members in making future business decisions, the two highest responses were recorded as segment perceptions (20 or 69%) and market trends (18 or 62%).



Attraction Guide and Website

When asked how effective member’s find the 1066 Country’s attraction guide in attracting visitors, half (16 or 50%) responded that it was somewhat effective. Over a third (34%) respondents did believe it was very or extremely effective, however 12.5% respondents believed it was not effective at all.

When asked how effective member’s find the 1066 Country’s website in attracting visitors, 44% respondents believed it was very or extremely effective. The majority of respondents (15 or 47%) believed it was somewhat effective and just under 10% not so effective.

Success factors: 1066 Country Service and Communications

The majority of member’s responses on what they believe stops 1066 County being more successful were:

- Lack of government funding and budgets
- Having more engagement from representatives who attend 1066 Country Marketing meetings
- Lack of business engagement

- Independence from councils
- Being more business like
- Poor transport infrastructure

All respondents (100%) reported their preferred communication channel from 1066 Country would be by email. One-fifth also responding with newsletter and in-person meetings as additional communication channels.

In terms of value for money for their membership, 26 (81%) respondents agree or strongly agree that it provides value for money. Only two (6%) respondents slightly disagreed.

Improving the 1066 Business Plan

Some of the comments recorded by members when asked for additional feedback or suggestions on how to improve the 1066 Country business plan included:

- You all do a great job, thank you
- I think members need to better understand how their subs enable a whole range of marketing opportunities i.e. education is key
- Consider launching the Business Plan as part of a members' networking event.
- Some government funding to stay alive would be great
- Focus on developing the area as a wine region and stop being so urban focused

APPENDIX 2: Options Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Factors considered / rationale
Strategic case	Fit with the wider tourism, community and regeneration plans and policy objectives including move towards LVEP / Experience Sussex.
Market	Whether this extends the reach of 1066 Country and appeal to existing (and new) members and stakeholders
Funding	Set up funding requirement Indicative resource requirement to set up option
	Sustainability Ability to identify and secure funding to sustain option in light of reduced public sector funding
	Risk Overall risks associated with taking forward the proposed option.
Operational	The operational risk and complexity associated in running the proposed option
Impacts	Ability to achieve growth in the visitor economy

APPENDIX 3:

Constitution: 1066 Country Executive Board



Background & Purpose:

1066 Country Marketing is the destination management organisation (DMO) for the Hastings, Rother and south-east of Wealden tourism offer. It is a public/private sector partnership, established in the early 1990's tasked with destination management and marketing for the area, promoting the area nationally and internationally to grow the visitor economy and deliver positive impacts in the area.

The Executive Board is there to oversee the successful delivery of the Business Plan and Marketing Strategy in a joined-up approach for tourism, working in partnership with a shared vision to develop the 1066 County visitor economy; and to promote the interests of tourism in 1066 Country through marketing campaigns and other associated initiatives.

Objectives:

- To advocate, lead, support and promote 1066 Country's unique selling points and environment, enhancing its visibility and appeal, attracting visitors and investment.
- To elevate the profile of 1066 Country, increasing travel exposure for the area.
- To ensure the 1066 visitor economy is coordinated and aligned with the needs of member businesses, with a clear range of products and expertise to enable them to realise their growth potential.
- To help join up the local visitor economy offer to regional and national business support and engagement services.
- To influence and support the 1066 Country business growth ambitions with Sussex Local Visitor Economy Partnership and pan East / West Sussex DMO; Experience Sussex.
- To help drive and secure new members to 1066 Country.
- To oversee the strategic ambitions and help deliver on the annual priorities of the 1066 Partnership.

Core activity:

<i>For our visitors:</i>	<i>For our members:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consumer marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel trade groups• Signposting

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigns (domestic and international) • Media and PR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, data and intelligence • Skills and training opportunities • Networking and events
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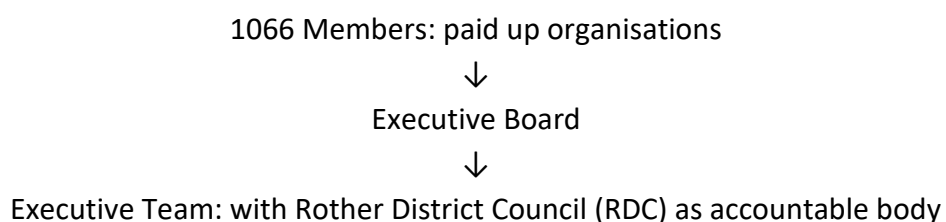
Outcomes:

In successfully delivering the strategic priorities, the following outcomes will be achieved:

- Increased year-round growth in visitor numbers (UK and International)
- New visitors attracted (UK and International) resulting in:
 - Increased visitor spend to the 1066 District
- Additional revenue secured for 1066 Country activities
- Greater investment and reinvestment
- Ensure sustainable delivery of marketing activity for the destination
- Improve the visitor experience resulting in:
 - Improved visitor satisfaction results and recommendation rates across all areas
- Greater number of sustainable tourism practices building a local reputation for sustainable tourism
- Interest from businesses to deliver improved quantity and quality of accommodation offer
- Improved visitor accommodation occupancy throughout the year

Monitoring of the above with Key Performance Indicators to be agreed by the Executive Board in conjunction with the development of the Annual Action Plan.

Structure:



Executive Board:

Strategic direction for 1066 Country is agreed by the Executive Board annually in the Annual Action Plan. This will align with the Partnership's longer reaching strategic documents and will respond to the needs of the members:

- Business Plan 2024-27
- Marketing Strategy 2016-25
- Membership survey

The Executive Board will be responsible for ensuring income to the partnership to allow agreed actions to take place.

Executive Team:

The Executive Team will prepare an Annual Action Plan to be presented at the March meeting, to be agreed and signed off by the Executive Board, against which monitoring and measuring progress will take place.

The Annual Action Plan will also guide Executive Board Members in their role for the coming year.

Accountable Body:

The key role of the Accountable Body for 1066 Country will be to:

- To be responsible for the annual budget and manage the finances, presenting budget updates to the Board.
- To host and support the 1066 Country staff
- To procure and contract with relevant organisations/companies to enable the delivery of marketing activity, including but not limited to Simple View, Tourism South East and Snapsea.
- To provide admin support to the EB 1/4ly meetings

In 2024 it was agreed that on the withdrawal of Hastings Borough Council from 1066 Country Rother District Council (RDC) would become the new accountable body.

The 1066 Country budget will be the responsibility of RDC, as the accountable body for the organisation. RDC will oversee the income and expenditure and present updated budgets to the Exec Board meetings. RDC is not responsible for financially supporting 1066 Country and the budget will not be allowed to be overspent.

RDC agrees as accountable body to provide the administrative support for the quarterly Executive Board meetings, any additional meetings must be supported by the Executive Board.

All Intellectual Property for 1066 will be held by RDC on behalf of the partnership.

Board Membership:

Executive Board:

1066 County Executive Board membership comprises:

Elected positions:

- Five area representatives (Battle, Bexhill, Rye, Wealden, Hastings) elected every 3 years in rotation and eligible to stand for re-election.
- Two Attraction Representatives, nominated by the Attractions Group, from tourism attraction organisations in the 1066 area appointed for 3 years and eligible for re-selection
- One Accommodation Representative elected for 3 years and eligible to stand for re-election.

Co-opted positions:

Sector Representatives:

- Up to two individuals from local visitor economy businesses, or support services to guide and advise the Executive Board in sector specific projects or to bring expert knowledge to the table as appropriate. These reps would contribute a personal and business knowledge for a time specific period to be agreed by the Executive Board.

Partnership positions:

Local Bodies:

- A representative of Experience Sussex as the delivery vehicle for East Sussex County Council

National Bodies:

- One representative from English Heritage.
- One representative from the National Trust.
- One representative from Tourism South East.

Local Authorities (non-political):

- Two named senior officers of Rother District Council.
- Two named senior officers of Wealden District Council.

Executive Team:

- 1 x officer RDC
- 1 x officer WDC
- Chair
- Vice Chair
- All 1066 staff members

- 1 x administrative support RDC

Board Selection:

- All appointed/ elected posts will be for a 3-year term.
- All posts will be appointed against the agreed job description and person specification.
- When a post is up for election, information about the role will be posted on the 1066 website and included in direct communications to members. Interest will be through a formal Expression of Interest to be returned to the 1066 County Executive Team for processing.
- Eligible nominations will be put forward to the 1066 membership to be voted on. Final approval/ratification will be agreed by the Executive Board.

Being an elected member of the 1066 Executive Board gives your tourism business free Gold Membership for each serving year.

Positions:**Chair:**

The Chair will need to be from a tourism organisation, the person will be expected to display business acumen which will contribute knowledge, experience and enthusiasm for tourism. The Chair must be able to offer time to the quarterly meetings and the pre-meetings.

The Chair will be the spokesperson for the Partnership and as such be a strong networker, bringing new partnership opportunities to the table and able to lobby for the sector. A Chair will be eligible for re-election for a maximum of three terms in office (9 years).

Notifications will be given in writing to Executive Board members giving 28 days to nominate their choice for a new Chair. The voting will be by majority decision via an in person or an e-vote.

In the event of a vote of no confidence in the Chair the Executive Board members will be given 28 days to nominate and vote in a new Chair, in the interim the Vice Chair will undertake the Chair's duties. A vote of no confidence will be carried by an absolute majority of all Executive Board members.

For all other members of the Exec Board any vote of no confidence will happen through the Chair with the same process as detailed above.

Vice Chair:

The Vice Chair will rotate between non-officer Executive Board Members. The Vice Chair will be agreed by the Exec Board at the start of the new financial year.

Notification will be given in writing to Executive Board members giving 28 days to nominate their choice for a new Vice Chair. The voting will be by majority decision via an in person or an e-vote. The retiring Vice Chair will be eligible for re-election.

Area Representatives:

We will look to elect an area rep from each of the main town areas in the partnership.

- Rye and surrounds
- Battle and surrounds
- Bexhill and surrounds
- Pevensey and Herstmonceux (to include Wealden based membership area located within 1066 Country)
- Hastings

The area rep will come from a member tourism business with links to that locality. The rep will be expected to engage with the local members in their geographical area and feedback the work of the 1066 Partnership as well as bringing local issues to the Exec Board meetings.

Each rep will hold at least a yearly meeting with local 1066 members only, along with regular communications throughout the year to gauge levels of:

- Satisfaction with the service
- Opportunities for training needs to be met
- Sector health check from businesses
- Feedback from members

Attraction Representatives:

Attraction representatives will be nominated through the Attractions group and approved by the Executive Board.

Reps must come from a tourism attraction located within the 1066 Country area or on the boundary of.

Reps will be expected to engage with all member attractions in the 1066 Country area and feedback the work of the 1066 Partnership as well as bringing local issues to the Executive Board meetings

The rep will hold at least yearly meetings with attractions, along with regular communications throughout the year to gauge levels of:

- Satisfaction with the service
- Opportunities for training needs to be met
- Attraction health check (how's business)
- Any feedback from member attractions

Accommodation Representative:

Accommodation representatives will be an elected position, with candidates wishing to stand elected by the 1066 membership.

We will look to appoint an accommodation rep to represent the whole 1066 area.

The rep will hold at least a yearly meeting with local 1066 accommodation members only, along with regular communications throughout the year to gauge levels of:

- Satisfaction with the service
- Opportunities for training needs to be met
- Sector health check from businesses
- Feedback from members

Co-opted Sector Representatives: 2 places

The Exec Board will look to appoint Sector Reps from tourism-related sectors as defined in the Executive Board Annual Operation Plan. This will allow the Executive Board to respond to current trends and changes.

Sector reps will be appointed on a project basis and with agreement from the Executive Board.

The length of time a Sector Rep will serve will be defined by the length of the project and will be agreed with the Rep and the Executive Board.

All Representatives (Area / Accommodation / Sector) on the Executive Board will regularly communicate with members in their area to receive feedback on progress of the Business Plan activities.

Conduct of Business and Meetings

The Board shall meet at least quarterly (either on-line or face to face) to pursue the Business Plan objectives. All meetings will be chaired by the Chair or, in their absence, by the Vice-Chair. If neither Chair nor Vice-Chair is present, those present at the meeting will elect a Chair for that meeting.

A full meeting of the Executive Board is only legal when it has been formally convened by the admin officer to the Executive Board at least 7 days prior to the meeting taking place. An Executive Board meeting is able to proceed when at least 50% of Members in post are present.

All Executive Board members are expected to attend Executive Board meetings. Apologies for non-attendance must be made in advance; member apologies will be considered at the

Executive Board meeting and accepted if agreed by the majority of attending members. 3 non-attended meetings without accepted apologies will result in removal from the Executive Board and will start the process for re-electing that position.

The Executive Board and any sub-groups will operate based on consensus. In the event of a disagreement the Chair or Vice-Chair, using all appropriate channels shall seek to resolve any differences arising within the Partnership. Where voting is applied to the decision-making process, unless otherwise decided by the Executive Board beforehand, the outcome of any vote will be determined by a majority of greater than 50% of those in attendance. In the event of a tied vote the Chair of the meeting has a deciding second vote or the right of veto.

The *“Standing Order for the Declaration of Pecuniary / Business Interests”* applies. A declaration of Exec Board member interests will be included as a standing agenda item at all meetings.

All items discussed at Executive Board meetings are confidential to the Executive Board members until the minutes of the meeting are approved, unless otherwise clearly stated in the meeting.

The Executive Board may assign sub-groups to work with and support the Executive Team in the delivery of specific priorities and objectives set out in the Business Plan. Admin support for such sub-groups needs to come from the Executive Board members.

All Board meetings will be an open platform for partners to discuss opportunities, barriers and sharing of best practice in a safe environment.

Minutes of each Executive Board meeting will be made publicly available online on the 1066 Country member pages on the website within ten working days.

Administration and frequency of Meetings:

The Executive Board will be supported by the Executive Team who will take responsibility for preparing the agenda, papers and minutes of each Executive Board meeting.

An annual calendar of meetings and venues rotating between the Executive Board members and local tourism member venues, will be agreed at the beginning of each financial year. 4 meetings a year will take place in March / June / Oct / Jan each year.

There will be an annual AGM to which all members are invited.

Budgeting

RDC will develop an annual statement of accounts showing the position of the partnership at the end of the financial year - to be agreed by the Executive Board and signed by the Chair at the June meeting.

RDC will also present an annual estimated budget for the coming year, to support the delivery of the strategic objectives and Annual Action Plan.

Dissolution of the 1066 Executive Board

Any Executive Board member can withdraw from the organisation with 3 months written notice.

The Executive Board can dissolve the 1066 Partnership if two-thirds or more of its members agree to do so in a vote. In such circumstances it will be for the accountable body to ensure any remaining fees are spent in accordance with the spirit of the partnership and that any assets are likewise disposed of.

If the Accountable Body withdraws from the partnership, the remaining main funding partners will take over the position of accountable body along with the ownership and control of the assets held including the partnership name, distinguishing marks and branding. Where no remaining funding partners wish to take over the accountable body status other Executive Board members can apply to fill that position and once agreed by the Executive Board all assets held by the Accountable Body will be passed over to the new body.

Review of Constitution

The Constitution will be reviewed at the beginning of each financial year.

If substantial in year changes take place affecting the constitution these will be addressed at the appropriate time.

Agreed at the Exec Board Meeting on the:

Signed by the 1066 Country Chair on behalf of the Exec Board:

Name: **Date:**

Signed: