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FUNDING CUTS DON'T NECESSARILY MEAN THE DEATH OF DMOs

We are all only too aware of the difficulties facing local authorities - with more demand on social services, mental health and education etc. Tourism is non-statutory activity and it's pretty clear from the 53% cut in tourism funding that we've seen in England over a period of 9 years, this is likely only to get worse. This decrease, combined with a £15.7m cut in Government funding to councils in the decade 2010-2020, will mean that budgets for tourism promotion and management will very soon be significantly reduced. As a result, DMOs can no longer rely on traditional sources of long-term funding or traditional models of operation and local authorities will have to look at new operating and funding models going forwards.

We believe that DMOs can have a bright future but only if they are prepared to look at what they do and how they do it.

Go To Places is the only official Destination Management Organisation delivering effective services across multiple counties using an innovative DMO funding model based on a mix of partnerships, outsourcing, smarter working, and collaboration to deliver which much needed economies of scale.

We have developed a unique DMO model which can offer bespoke services (developing products and business partnerships, research, funding bids, marketing) or completely managing your outsourced DMO.

The Go To Places' DMO model has been borne out of the highly successful Visit Kent, which started in 2002 and which, since 2015, has also delivered a portfolio of services from major national projects,

destination management planning to full DMO delivery, such as Visit Herts. Hertfordshire operates with on-territory Destination Managers but without office overheads. Back-office and specialist support is provided from the Go To Places head office. In this way we can spend our partners' contributions on activity rather than rent and photocopiers! Our destinations (and other DMOs) also benefit from off-the-shelf products such as our hugely popular "Big Weekend" campaign (now running across 4 destinations) and our in-depth research programmes.

We are able to take on outsourcing from other county, district, borough or city authorities whether that is operating the whole, or part, of the DMO activity. In fact, the more DMOs we can help, the more everyone will gain from the economies of scale.

Very much a part of the 'Smarter working' strategy we implement for DMOs at Go To Places, is our focus on inspirational content creation. Since the beginning of 2018 Go Places have implemented a brand-new content strategy for the Visit Kent and Visit Herts core digital channels. This hugely successful strategy has seen a more focused approach to content creation, which has included more advanced planning and a regularly updated stream of thematic content to help drive more engagement with our brands. This strategy has included the creation of a new in-house author's group, responsible for core content creation across our digital channels, including social media and the websites and the creation of a detailed digital content calendar, with content planned up to three

months in advance. Along with these in-house actions, we have also increased the volume of newsletters sent to our DMO databases and specifically focussed on the creation of regular 'features' - thematic, blog-style features posted and promoted across the digital channels every month with correlating thematic social media posts. To date the new strategy has been extremely successful in building upon our range of digital channels and has helped to drive significant growth across all of our channels.

Visitors are now looking to experience destinations like a local with experiential activities and attractions and the discovery of local hidden gems. The content strategy gives us the flexibility and the infrastructure to deliver a huge range of inspirational placemaking content - content that can really share the story of a destination and give a sense of place and experience. Our head of Digital Marketing, Jim Dawson will share more details in his 'Placemaking' conference presentation.

We'd be pleased to talk to you about how we could help you.

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GO TO PLACES

Bringing people together, helping places thrive