

### CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. The Value of Tourism
3. Our Offer
4. Where are we now? Looking at the evidence.
5. Where do we want to be?
6. How can we get there? Tourism Growth Plan
  - Strategic Priorities
    1. Creating a strong, distinctive and visible destination
    2. Improve productivity
    3. Strategic product development
  - Enablers
    - People & skills
    - Connectivity
    - Places to stay
    - A first class welcome

DRAFT

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Hailed as the birthplace of popular tourism thanks to the entrepreneurial activities of local travel pioneer Thomas Cook, Leicester & Leicestershire still recognise the value of the visitor economy almost 180 years on. In 2018 the £1.88bn injected into the local economy by 34.93 million visitors supported 23,076 jobs. The benefits of a thriving tourism industry however are not just economic; they make our area a more attractive place to live, study and do business in. Our rich heritage, beautiful natural landscapes and world class visitor attractions help create a place that all can enjoy and feel proud of.

Tourism and hospitality is an important economic sector for Leicester & Leicestershire and is recognised as having the potential to become one of the key drivers of the local economy. This plan provides a framework for further sector growth by setting down key priorities, activities and projects that partners and stakeholders collectively feel offer the best prospects to increase the competitiveness of the destination and maximise the wealth it can generate. The plan will focus effort, reduce duplication, inform, guide and influence decisions on investment and bring independent and individual partners together to increase their impact. By visualising and developing the area as a single, integrated visitor destination, we can achieve even more: more growth, more visitors, more economic value and more jobs.

**This is a five year plan for the destination and all its stakeholders; from those that fund and support it to those who provide the direct visitor experiences in our hotels, attractions, shops and restaurants.**

#### **Vision Statement:**

**We want to become a leading leisure and business tourism destination where visitors are compelled to come and uncover our story, increasing the value of tourism to the local economy to £2.1bn by 2025.**

**City Mayor**

*Introduction by City Mayor, Leicester City Council*

**Leader**

*Introduction by Leader of Leicestershire County Council*

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### 2. THE VALUE OF TOURISM

The economic potential of Leicester & Leicestershire was significantly enhanced by the discovery of the remains of King Richard III in 2012 and his reinterment in Leicester Cathedral in 2015. The value of this remarkable story to the area is not just financial (it brought £54m to the local economy), it provided a spotlight that enabled both the City and the County to showcase the area's rich heritage and tourism potential. The opening of the King Richard III Visitor Centre in 2014, just two years after the initial discovery, along with the multi-award winning Bosworth Battlefield heritage centre, gave the area a focus to share its remarkable, and truly unique, story with the world. The story stimulated a host of new developments; including the popular Story of Leicester heritage programme, an on-street and digital celebration of the City's 2,000 years of heritage. Several years on, the story continues to inspire exciting new initiatives, the latest being the Bosworth 1485 Legacy Sculpture Trail.

Not long after the King Richard III story catapulted Leicester & Leicestershire onto the world stage, the City's football team astounded the international sporting community in 2016 by winning the Premier League at odds of 5,000 to 1. It quickly became one of the greatest sporting stories of all time and again the area had the eyes of the world upon it. These two great stories have really helped to make our area both distinctive and memorable. The visitor economy is already showing the benefits, since 2013 there has been an increase of 26.9%<sup>1</sup> in value from the sector, 18.6%<sup>1</sup> increase in visitors and a 12.6%<sup>1</sup> increase in employment. With growth rates above the national average, the visitor economy has a new found confidence. Proposed new hotel developments in the city could create around 850 new bed spaces for visitors staying overnight in the area, many of our leading visitor attractions have multi-million pound growth ambitions and the City and county districts are creating tourism strategies that highlight their unique selling points to capitalise on the economic advantages that a growing tourism industry will bring.

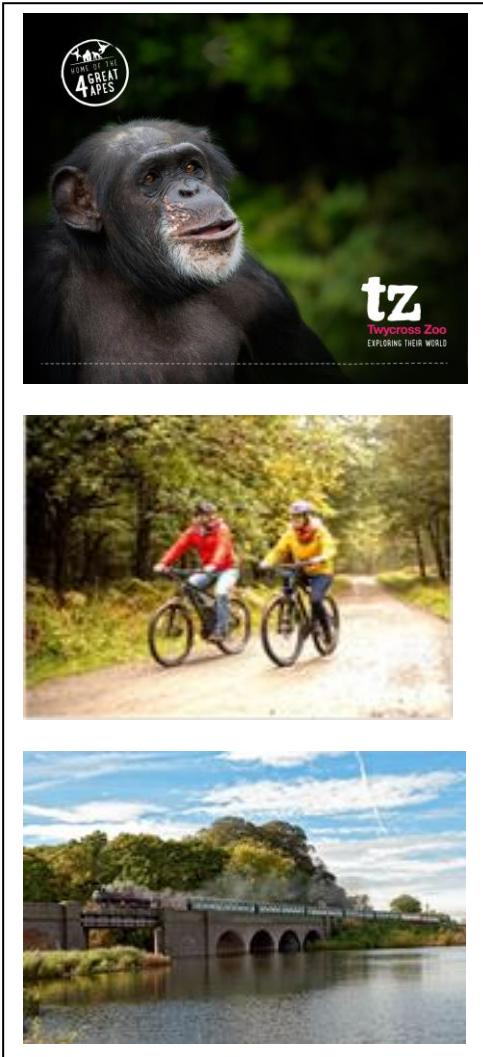
This plan will capitalise on this success and heightened profile to take the visitor economy to the next stage, making Leicester & Leicestershire a leading visitor destination for both business and leisure purposes.

---

<sup>1</sup>STEAM Final Trend Report Greater Leicestershire 2009-2018

# Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

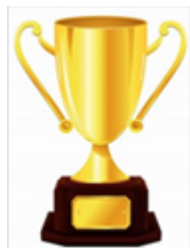
## 3. OUR OFFER



Map showing distribution of principal attractions in the sub-region (from the LLEP Leicester & Leicestershire Tourism and Hospitality Sector Growth Plan 2015-2020)

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

### OUR TROPHY CABINET



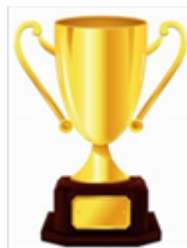
**Dandelion  
Hideaway  
(Osbaston)**

Winner of Visit  
Britain Glamping  
Provider of the  
Year 2017



**Stoney Cove UK  
National Dive  
Centre (Stoney  
Stanton)**

2018 Diver  
Awards World  
Dive Centre of  
the Year (3rd)



**King Richard III  
Visitor Centre  
(Leicester)**

Visit Britain Best  
Told Story Award  
2018

2018 Group  
Leisure & Travel  
Awards - Best  
Museum

School Travel  
Awards 2017



**National Space  
Centre  
(Leicester)**

Winner of UK  
Events Awards  
Unique Venue of  
the Year 2016

Visit Britain Best  
Told Story  
Award 2018



**National Forest  
Timber Festival**

UK Festival  
Awards Winner  
Best New  
Festival 2018



**Leicester  
Conferences  
(Oadby)**

MIA Awards –  
Best Team  
2018



**Twycross Zoo**

British & Irish  
Association of Zoos  
and Aquariums 2018

\*Gold – Exhibit –  
Chimpanzee Eden

\*Silver - Animal  
Husbandry, Care and  
Breeding and  
Education

National Institute of  
Directors – Director  
of the Year 2016



**Imago Venues  
(Loughborough)**

*M&IT 2019*

Gold Award Winner –  
Best Academic Venue &  
Best Food & Beverage  
Supplier

Bronze Award Winner  
Best UK Conference  
Centre

*Academic Venue  
Awards 2018*

\*Best Residential  
Conference Venue

\*Best Training Venue

\*Best Accommodation

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### 4. WHERE WE ARE NOW? LOOKING AT THE EVIDENCE

This plan has been developed to capitalise on the opportunities, and address the local challenges, that were identified from comprehensive market intelligence.

Before starting to develop this plan, intelligence was gathered on the performance of the local visitor economy currently.

#### What we found out:

- ▶ **Day visitors:** The area attracted around 34.9 million visitors in 2018, of which the vast majority (89%, over 31 million) were day visitors.<sup>1</sup> Peak months for day visitors are November, March and February<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ **Overnight visitors:** We welcome 3.76 million staying visitors<sup>1</sup> each year and domestic overnight trips to our area are increasing – from 8.6 million overnight trips in 2009 to 10.7 million in 2018.<sup>1</sup> Whilst overnight trips account for only 11% of visitor numbers, they account for 39% of economic impact.<sup>1</sup> Peak months for staying visitors are December, July and August.
- ▶ **Visiting Friends and Relations:** A high proportion of trips to the area are visits to friends and family (56%), higher than the national average
- ▶ **Business Tourism :** 17% of domestic overnight trips to our area are for business purposes, compared to the national average of 14%
- ▶ **Jobs:** The visitor economy in 2018 supported 17,612 FTE jobs through direct tourism expenditure and a further 4,821 jobs through indirect tourism revenue<sup>1</sup> – almost as many as the retail sector. The Office for National Statistics (ONS)<sup>2</sup> shows tourism industry employment in our area increased by 35.5% compared to a 20.2% increase in England as a whole.
- ▶ **Tourism enterprises:** The ONS business count data<sup>3</sup> shows that the number of tourism industry enterprises in our area has increased by 18.2% between 2013 and 2018 compared to a 20.2% increase in England as a whole. In a business survey undertaken in 2018, the majority of respondents reported improved business performance compared to 5 years ago and 65% expected performance to be better over the next 5 years. 84% of businesses surveyed were planning for growth.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> BRES. Nomis, 2019

<sup>3</sup> UK Business Counts. Nomis, 2019

<sup>4</sup> Leicester and Leicestershire Business Survey 2018.



## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### What this data tells us:

- ▶ **Tourism is a growth sector.** The value of the sector, the number of visitors and the number of tourism enterprises in our area are all growing. Local businesses are optimistic about business performance over the next 5 years.
- ▶ **The visitor economy needs to thrive** to maintain its value to the local economy of £1.88bn,<sup>1</sup> support a growing number of tourism enterprises and the 23,076<sup>1</sup> people directly or indirectly employed in the sector.
- ▶ **Leicester & Leicestershire is currently dominated by day trips** because we are within easy distance of a big population. If we are to convert day to stay we need to attract visitors from a wider geographical area, in particular those that have easy road and rail links. People travelling longer distances are more likely to stay overnight.
- ▶ **We need to increase the number and value of staying visitors.** Staying visitors have greatest impact on our local economy but account for just 11% of total visitor numbers and we have spare capacity in our serviced accommodation stock.
- ▶ **Local residents need to be tourism ambassadors for Leicester & Leicestershire.** The visiting friends and family market is important and we need to ensure that local people and students at our universities are our tourism ambassadors.
- ▶ **We have a high value business tourism sector to capitalise on.**

We then carried out extensive visitor and non-visitor research, consulted widely with local tourism businesses and undertook desk based research to find out how we can further unlock the potential of the sector.

### What we found out from visitors and non-visitors:

- ▶ Awareness and understanding of what the destination has to offer tourists, and the perception of the quality of that offer, is a significant barrier to sector growth. Non-visitors are unsure of what is on offer whilst those who have visited are muted in their evaluation.
- ▶ Leicester is recognised for its vibrant cultural diversity and its connectedness (in terms of transport links)
- ▶ There was no strong sense of place for Leicestershire compared to other rural shires but there was a sense of rural beauty and tranquillity.
- ▶ Individual towns' narratives are not particularly distinctive: they come across as low-key, gentle, comfortable, familiar and small-scale.
- ▶ Food is a strong theme and Melton Mowbray has the highest food-related profile.
- ▶ Visitors said that a good quality shopping offer, centred around independents and markets, would be a particular motivator to visit



## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### What we found out from businesses:

- ▶ The main barriers to growth identified by tourism businesses surveyed were profile of the region as a tourism destination, increased operating costs, increased competition, economic uncertainty and access/parking. There is a feeling that the area needs to crystalize its identity and everyone needs to use it.
- ▶ Local tourism businesses were asked to select from a list what Leicester & Leicestershire could do better to attract more visitors. 'More/better marketing of the place' was selected by 73% of respondents, followed by 'better transport to and around Leicester & Leicestershire' (61%), 'better signage and visitor information' (56%) and 'events and festivals' (50%).
- ▶ Young people are not drawn to the sector for work. There needs to be more sector engagement in schools to make careers in tourism and hospitality more attractive
- ▶ Businesses are pro-development but many key attractions are at capacity.
- ▶ Day visitors dominate. Much of the visitor economy is 'local'.

### What we found out from our desk research:

- ▶ The area's waterways have untapped leisure potential. Leicestershire is surrounded by 70 miles of water and eight rivers.
- ▶ In current on-line, travel brand and 'official' references to the area, including Google search and social media platforms, it emerged that there was a lack of a shared place narrative for the wider destination and there was little use of place by non-tourism organisations, or by visitor attractions themselves

### What this data tells us:

- ▶ **We need to establish a clear identity for the area and promote it through a coherent campaign** that is easy to get behind and straightforward for businesses to use and adopt
- ▶ **All stakeholders understand that the whole (Leicester + Shire) can be more than the sum of the parts**
- ▶ **There are some areas of untapped potential** including the waterways, the retail offer, the food and drink offer and business tourism.
- ▶ **There are a range of infrastructure challenges** that need to be addressed to underpin the growth of the sector including skills, accessibility and the visitor welcome
- ▶ **Businesses want to see a shift from reliance on local day visitors.**

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

Based on visitor and non-visitor research that was carried out, and an assessment of what we already have on offer across the city and county, research was undertaken into the opportunities provided by new audience segments that we could target, grow and develop in the longer term. We will continue to grow our existing audiences but in addition want to inspire less developed leisure visitor segments to come.

Using Visit England research and segmentation models, our existing leisure visitor base is mostly mature couples with no children at home, who enjoy holidays in the UK that offer a wealth of cultural experiences, connections to the country's history and heritage and beautiful countryside. In addition we selected audience segments where we can make inroads and establish a presence, are a good fit for what we already have on offer and are open to ideas and inspiration. Focusing on these segments will help to guide and inform our marketing and product development. We recognise that each tourism business will have its own target markets, depending on its offer, but for the wider destination these segments offer strongest future growth potential. By focusing on two younger segments we are investing for the future, securing repeat visits over the coming years.

**Our research told us** these Visit Britain visitor segments were our closest fit:

TARGET MARKET PEN PORTRAITS

| Active Family Fun Seekers   | Free & Easy Mini-Breakers   |
|---|---|
|   |    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Families and groups of families with kids under 16</li><li>▶ Multi-generational and blended families</li><li>▶ Mid levels of affluence – but prepared to spend and treat themselves when they are on holiday</li><li>▶ Want lots to do - whatever the weather</li><li>▶ Particularly interested in visitor attractions, activities, events</li><li>▶ Interested in learning too – but in stimulating, fun, interactive ways</li><li>▶ "If kids are happy we are happy"</li><li>▶ Eating, drinking, socialising is an important part of the experience</li><li>▶ Interested in both city and rural areas</li><li>▶ Will come for day and overnights trips as well as visiting friends &amp; relatives, depending on their particular circumstances</li><li>▶ Motivated by family-orientated experiences, accommodation and activities</li><li>▶ Want ideas and inspiration</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Typically younger – under 35s</li><li>▶ Enjoy travelling – solo, couples, groups</li><li>▶ Mid levels of affluence and enjoy spending on themselves</li><li>▶ Want lots to do – like to cram as much in to a break as possible</li><li>▶ Up for activities – like to give things a go – "You only live once"</li><li>▶ Social experiences really important</li><li>▶ Sense of place is significant – want to get to know the place</li><li>▶ Interested in insider tips – "live like a local"</li><li>▶ Want things to be easy and no hassle</li><li>▶ Want experiences they can share and ideally brag about</li><li>▶ Most likely to base themselves in the city – but up for travelling out for the right experience</li><li>▶ Will come for overnight stays – weekend and long-weekend breaks</li><li>▶ Visiting friends is an important sub-segment</li><li>▶ Events are a particular motivator to "come now" – festivals, music, sporting &amp; cultural events</li></ul> |

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

Next we undertook research into domestic and international leisure tourism trends through sources provided by Visit Britain. It is important that we future proof our tourism industry by developing in a way that will make us attractive to future visitors.

### Our research told us:

- ▶ People are looking for new, attractive places which are easy to get to when they take a leisure trip. They are attracted to destinations with high quality eating and drinking, and to hotels offering accommodation deals.
- ▶ Visitors want to be seen as temporary locals seeking emotional connection to a shared experience. People are searching for authentic, often bespoke, experiences and local knowledge to make their visit memorable rather than just what they can visit
- ▶ There is a trend for staycations with the value of the pound weak
- ▶ There is continuing popularity for short breaks with more people taking more breaks more often
- ▶ Digital is everywhere and always on. It has transformed how visitors search, plan and book trips and how visitors communicate and find information during their stay. Sharing content (images and video especially) is preferred to content created by destinations.
- ▶ Visitors demand better value and continue to search for bargains
- ▶ Ethical priorities continue to evolve and there is growing emphasis on cultural capital.
- ▶ There is concern about health and a desire to escape everyday pressures is driving more active leisure trips.

Finally we commissioned research into the business tourism sector to complement work on the leisure tourism sector.

### What we found out:

- ▶ **There is no baseline data** on event space occupancy to calculate the volume and value of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Events (MICE)
- ▶ **The area does not currently feature on the UK destination awareness monitor** for international buyers. Visit Britain does not currently profile the area in key MICE activity nor is the area represented at any key MICE event
- ▶ The Business Visits & Events Partnership class Leicester as a tertiary destination yet the size of its offer has the capability to be second tier
- ▶ **The area has a strategically beneficial location** for the meeting and events sector with excellent road, rail and air links
- ▶ **The area has 140 market-ready meeting and event spaces**, accommodation providers and incentive tourism options able to accommodate between 5 to 2,500 delegates and one of the largest hotels in the UK. This asset mix offers rich pickings for event planners.
- ▶ **There are proposals to create an additional 850 bed spaces by 2021** in Leicester; ranging from chain budgets to four star full-service hotels.

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

### 5. WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

**We want to become a leading leisure and business tourism destination where visitors are compelled to come and uncover our story, increasing the value of tourism to the local economy to £2.1bn by 2025.**

Between 2018 and 2025, we aim to increase staying visitors by 839,000 (22.3%), day visitors by 2.1m (6.7%) and the economic impact of tourism by £222m (11.8%).

These increases equate to an average annual increase of 2.9% for staying visitors, 0.9% for day visitors and 1.6% for economic impact. These are realistic yet ambitious targets that depend on delivery of this Plan – especially on increasing the number of staying visitors more than day visitors.

The key performance indicators (KPIs) are shown in the table here. They will help to keep us on track and be reported through partnership mechanisms including the Tourism Advisory Board and local authorities.

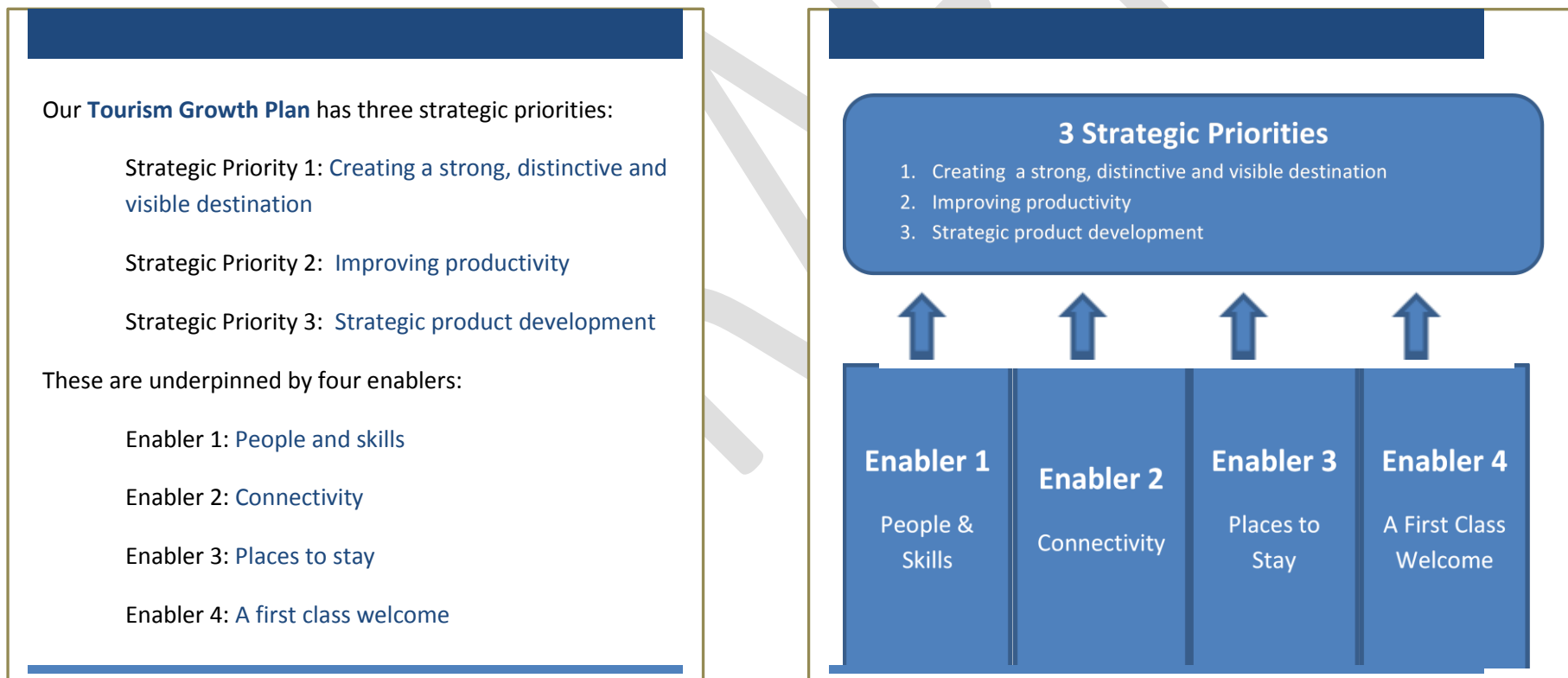
| KPI   | Why it's important   | Measured by.....                             |
|---|--|--|
| Staying visitors & accommodation occupancy  | To determine success in attracting staying visitors and improvements in seasonal spread              | STR hotel trend analysis reports             |
| Economic Impact   | To monitor tourism sector performance by measuring day and staying visitor numbers and spend         | Annual STEAM tourism economic impact reports |
| Number and value of Meetings Incentive, Conference and Events (MICE) activity that involve overnight stay | To monitor the success of business tourism activity in promoting overnight stays and economic impact | Business tourism service local KPIs          |

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

### 6. HOW CAN WE GET THERE?

#### Creating a Tourism Growth Plan that the whole sector can get behind

There are a number of tourism and economic development plans for the component parts of the Leicester & Leicestershire destination. This is the opportunity to align them and give the sector a unified focus. A plan for the sector is a shared statement of intent and will set down key priorities, activities and projects that funders and stakeholders feel offer the best prospects to increase the competitiveness of the destination and maximise the wealth that the tourism sector can create. It will help stakeholders to visualise the actions they will take to play their part in achieving our collective ambitions for the area over the next 5 years.



## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### TOURISM GROWTH PLAN - STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

#### Strategic Priority 1: Creating a strong, distinctive and visible destination.

Tourism is fiercely competitive and destinations operate in a global environment, all working hard to be noticed. Visitors can go anywhere and are particular about the destinations they choose: they know what they want, can easily check what's available and how others rate it.

From research, we know there is low awareness and knowledge of our tourism offer, particularly among those who haven't visited. Seen from the outside, there is no consistent narrative about the area to suggest a strong sense of place, and in many cases tourism businesses don't even say they are located in Leicester and Leicestershire in their marketing communications. The tourism sector is fragmented and tends to prioritise local or individual concerns rather than collaborating on a shared ambition.

To get recognition as a tourism destination of choice, we need to clearly establish our identity in the marketplace, differentiate ourselves for external audiences and be clear about what we offer. We need to start controlling the destination messaging that is out there to avoid a plethora of mixed communications filling the vacuum. Then we must get our stakeholders to collectively get behind our campaign brand so everyone can benefit from a stronger and more visible national profile and enable the destination to grow its share of the visitor market.

**Uncover the Story** is the campaign brand that has been identified to address this challenge and provide an imaginative way to repackage our tourism offer. It has a strong 'nod' to the area's hero story of the King Richard III discovery and yet is sufficiently generic that all tourism businesses can align themselves with it. Many of our attractions, cultural experiences and heritage assets seek to tell some of the UK's most important stories, from the celebrity fossil Charnia to our part in the conquest of space, and these associations can make our tourism offer more intriguing and vibrant. They can make that authentic, emotive connection between visitor and place that has been eluding us and give a fragmented sector the cohesion it needs to achieve real growth.

**Uncover the Story** recognises the fact that Leicester & Leicestershire is a destination made up of a collection of different visitor products and experiences, all with a unique tale to tell. It enables us to tell our story through our partners rather than taking a 'top down' approach to selling the area, making our local businesses our destination ambassadors. A compendium of local stories will be used as hooks for external audiences (including consumers, travel trade and the media) and used to inspire itineraries, narrative for destination videos and websites.

Together, in partnership, we will use **Uncover the Story**, to raise awareness of Leicester & Leicestershire as a compelling and distinctive destination. We will articulate what is special about the area and motivate others to visit it.

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

We will do this through:

- ▶ Provision of an **Uncover the Story** toolkit and guidelines for use for tourism businesses that will establish the campaign identity, brand mark, style, tone and photography
- ▶ Delivering a high profile launch event
- ▶ Supporting key businesses to find ways to tell their stories
- ▶ Generating a compendium of core stories, created by individual businesses, through which we will build the campaign brand and create stakeholder champions.
- ▶ Creation of an asset bank of images and video to support **Uncover the Story**
- ▶ Developing a destination profile based on **Uncover the Story** on key digital platforms such as Trip Advisor, Visit England/Visit Britain,
- ▶ Supporting our museums to become our primary storytellers of place and gateways to Leicester & Leicestershire
- ▶ Using the Uncover the Story brand narrative in promotional materials.
- ▶ Work with the region's gateways (rail, air, road) around the messages they convey about Leicester & Leicestershire as a tourism destination.



## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### Strategic Priority 2: Improve Productivity

Leicester and Leicestershire already have great tourism assets, we just need to maximise their potential to the visitor economy. Our tourism assets have the potential to deliver more: more visitors, more spend, more profitable businesses, more jobs and more economic impact. We have capacity in many of our hotels and guest houses, restaurants and attractions, particularly in low season, and we need to find new ways to fill it. We don't necessarily need lots of new product to achieve our objectives; we can focus on making our existing assets more productive by improving them, investing in them or packaging them up to make them more appealing to more people.

We can encourage the visitors who come to the area to stay longer and spend more. We can use our marketing resources to target larger groups and premium visitors and do more to broadcast our existing tourism offer to potential domestic and international audiences. We need to see a shift from 'day' to 'stay' as longer visits equate to greater visitor spend and as part of this approach need to ensure we have the accommodation infrastructure to support it. In areas where accommodation is at capacity, we will take a more pro-active approach to addressing supply, and support planned investment, so that this barrier to growth is removed.

As part of our efforts to improve productivity, our ambition is to realise the full economic potential of the business tourism sector to help fill our hotels and meeting venues, address seasonality and better utilise our attractions for the corporate market. Our area, located in the centre of the country with great road, rail and air connectivity, is ideally suited for national meetings, incentives, conferences and events (MICE). With over 140 unique, quality assured and award winning event venues available, we have considerable local potential. Our aim is to champion business tourism and ensure the sector remains a vitally important part of our local visitor economy. We need to work towards a step change in promoting the offer to increase the number of companies planning and booking meetings and conferences in the area.

#### We will do this through:

- ▶ **Developing a Business Tourism Strategy and implementing its recommendations**
- ▶ **Maximising the value of digital promotional platforms to showcase our destination, connect consumers with our tourism offer and inspire and inform them so they want to visit.**
- ▶ **Creating themed itineraries and trails for free independent travellers and the group travel market to extend visitor days and stays.**
- ▶ **Creating more bookable product to increase collaboration with the travel trade and support inbound tourism initiatives then promote through online channels as a route to market (TXGB, Visit Britain Supplier Directory & E-Shop, Airbnb)**

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

- ▶ Amplifying the tourism offer that best fits and inspires our target markets, those visitor segments likely to visit during the low season and premium value visitors
- ▶ Increasing all weather facilities to make better seasonal use of existing product and increase venue capacity where demand exceeds supply
- ▶ Improving in-destination information tools and developing mechanisms and activity that will support cross promotion of our tourism product, especially through major cultural and sporting events.
- ▶ Maximising opportunities to reach new audiences by linking up to regional and national initiatives that have a good fit with our local tourism offer (e.g. Discover England Fund, Coventry City of Culture, Birmingham Commonwealth Games, Midlands Engine China Strategy)
- ▶ Supporting SMEs and micro businesses to improve business performance (e.g. through digital connectivity to increase profitability, knowledge and skills to access investment funding, working with the travel trade etc.)
- ▶ Encouraging local residents to be our tourism ambassadors through campaigns like #HomeTourist to capitalise on the strength of the Visiting Friends and Relations (VFR) market
- ▶ Conduct an audit of visitor information and ensure it is available where visitors are most likely to need it and in their preferred format

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### Strategic Priority 3: Strategic Product Development

We will focus our attention on three key areas of activity:

- ▶ Activity 1: Backing our Winners
- ▶ Activity 2: Product Development Campaigns
- ▶ Activity 3: Developing Local Destinations

#### Activity 1: Backing our Winners

We intend to champion product developments that will help us to achieve our growth targets. This includes supporting our strongest brands; those that have the potential to sell our area most powerfully and distinctly in the market place – our large attractions, our unique attractions, our National attractions and our award winners. We will support high profile, ambitious regeneration and infrastructure projects that have the potential to deliver great quality experiences, drive additional visitors, extend visitor stay, increase visitor spend and create new jobs. We appreciate that new product helps add breadth and depth to the destination offer and will widen its appeal to new audiences.

Among those projects we have identified as our winners are:

- ▶ **National Space Centre** – Vision 2025: More Space, Greater Impact (including expansion and 4D theatre)
- ▶ **Twycross Zoo** – TZ2030 Vision (ambition to achieve over 1 million visitors through National Science & Conservation Centre concept and nationally-recognised children's character zone opening in 2021)
- ▶ **Roman Leicester at Jewry Wall** – a new visitor attraction celebrating Leicester's Roman heritage
- ▶ **Conkers** – Heart of the Forest Vision (including UK's longest Aerial Walkway)
- ▶ **Great Central Railway** – Growth Plan (including the Bridging the Gap project)
- ▶ **Bosworth 1485 Legacy Sculpture Trail** – sculpture trail of 6 art works in Market Bosworth and surrounding area related to King Richard III
- ▶ **Everards Meadows and Fosse Park** development (includes new beer hall, brewery tours, retail, cycle centre and café)
- ▶ **Melton Rural Food Enterprise and Innovation Centre** (a centre of excellence to underpin the Rural Capital of Food brand)

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

### Activity 2: Product development campaigns

We will support soft product development in areas where we already have strengths, creating themed campaigns to better articulate and promote what we are best at using channels that will reach our chosen visitor segments. The areas where we feel we have a strong offer are our unique King Richard III discovery story, food and drink and outdoor activity. In the future we see opportunities for campaigns around use of the latest digital technology in historical interpretation, education and entertainment, for example as part of the proposed Roman Leicester at Jewry Wall project.

Each campaign encapsulates a facet of the area that will help to make Leicester & Leicestershire distinctive as a visitor destination and will help to unify urban and rural areas. Product development campaign themes include:

- ▶ **The King Richard III Discovery Story** – *creating a critical mass of activities and experiences themed around the remarkable King Richard III discovery and the King's connection with Leicester and Leicestershire.*

#### **We will do this through:**

- ▶ **Closer partnership working with key attractions: King Richard III Visitor Centre, Bosworth Battlefield and Visitor Centre, Bosworth 1485 Legacy Sculpture Trail and King Richard III walking trail in Leicester**
  - ▶ **Mapping places in the area with links to the Wars of the Roses.**
  - ▶ **Creating and promoting themed itineraries and bookable product**
- ▶ **Taste the Place** – *a campaign to highlight the area's food and drink reputation by showcasing sub-regional food and drink both to eat, drink, buy, see in production and experience through activities and events.*

#### **We will do this through:**

- ▶ **Supporting the ambitions of Melton to develop its reputation as Rural Capital of Food through the Melton Story Plan**
- ▶ **Festivals and events like the Melton food festivals, Edible Forest, Canteen and Harborough Taste Trail to animate and profile the area**
- ▶ **Encouraging visitors to experience the food and drink they consume through a range of curated experiences including brewery and distillery behind-the-scenes tours, gin schools, food demonstrations, tasting sessions, workshops and classes**
- ▶ **Encouraging the tourism industry to 'keep it local' by sourcing local produce to add value and enhance the visitor experience through authentic local flavours.**
- ▶ **Creating and promoting themed itineraries and bookable product**

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

- ▶ **Fit-cation** – *inspiring gentle adventuring and personal challenges through short break activity holidays and trips*

### **We will do this through:**

- Mapping our country sports, waterways, golfing, cycling, walking and outdoor pursuits activities and identify those with bookable product or established routes and trails and link them more obviously to the visitor economy infrastructure
- Capitalising on the fact that Leicestershire is surrounded by 70 miles of water and divided by the River Soar to develop a range of leisure activities on or near rivers and canals in partnership with West Midlands Growth Company and Canal & River Trust
- Promoting the E-bike Holidays National Forest short breaks
- Closer partnership working with established providers to create more bookable product and itineraries e.g. National Forest, Rutland Cycling, Stoney Cove Dive Centre, Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre, Let's Get Lost Leicester etc.
- Work in partnership to develop more visitor friendly walking and cycling routes and trails that offer something special and share our unique stories.

- ▶ **Creative Edge** – *promoting discovery and creativity, using cutting edge technology to enhance the experience of visitors.*

### **We will do this through:**

- Encouraging those attractions, cultural experiences and heritage assets that tell some of the UK's most important stories to keep investing in technology to enhance the visitor experience, improve interpretation and engage visitors creatively with their messages
- Supporting our major growth projects like Roman Leicester at Jewry Wall and National Space Centre Vision 2025 in their work to develop experiences using augmented and virtual reality and 4D.
- Embracing opportunities to promote Leicester as the centre of UK E-Sports, supporting the sector's needs and identifying how it can support our tourist aims
- Mapping existing apps and online content that help visitors to better understand and enjoy our tourism assets and destinations then increase their visibility and facilitate their wider promotion

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### Activity 3: Developing Local Destinations

We will support the development and promotion of individual visitor destinations in the area and help them amplify and define their distinctive offer by working in partnership with district councils, tourism organisations and partnerships and in line with agreed local tourism development plans.

- ▶ **Leicester** – The city is one of the oldest in England and celebrates its 2,000 years of heritage through museums, visitor centres and on-street interpretation. This is being further developed through the Old Town project which will rebrand and interpret the historic core of the city. Leicester also provides the focus for the King Richard III discovery story through the Visitor Centre and Cathedral. The city provides the urban core of the destination and can act as a gateway to the wider area as well as a mini break destination in its own right. It has the largest accommodation offer, a cosmopolitan food and drink offer, a complimentary retail offer and strong cultural and entertainment offer.
- ▶ **The National Forest and the Forest Town of Ashby de la Zouch** – The National Forest has been developing as an exemplar sustainable tourism destination for the past 25 years and we want to support its ambitions to further develop the Forest experience in line with the priorities identified in its Tourism Growth Plan. The collective National Forest as a destination provides a critical mass of activities that are distinctive to the Forest and create a strong joined-up offer including walking and cycling trails, the Hicks Lodge Cycle Centre, Conkers family visitor attraction, events and festivals. The attractive market town of Ashby de la Zouch is also developing its reputation as a ‘Forest Town’ and has a good independent retail, food and drink offer with Ashby Castle (managed by English Heritage) a well-known landmark.
- ▶ **The Market Towns and District Visitor Hubs**  
Tourism is important to the economy of our market towns and in partnership we can help amplify the tourism offer that is being developed.
  - **Harborough & Market Harborough** – The area combines an attractive waterways offer, unique cultural offer (Nevill Holt Opera and Kilworth House Theatre), luxury hotels and fine dining experiences in addition to a strong outdoor pursuits and activities offer (Armourgeddon, Avalanche Adventure, Axceler-8, Wistow Maze etc.) . Market Harborough is a charming 13<sup>th</sup> century market town with a quality independent retail and food and drink offer (successfully promoted through Taste Harborough). The market town of Lutterworth is full of stories waiting to be uncovered including that of Sir Frank Whittle, inventor of the jet engine. The Grand Union Canal runs through the area and features the longest and steepest staircase locks in the UK at Foxton Locks.

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

- **Melton Mowbray** – This is one of the oldest market towns in the UK. It promotes itself as the Rural Capital of Food reflecting the area’s association with Melton Mowbray pork pies, Stilton cheese, agriculture and food manufacturing. The town supports a successful calendar of themed food related festivals including the National Pie Awards, Artisan Cheese Fair, Choc Fest and East Midlands Food Festival. Through the Melton Story vision, articulated in the Melton Borough Destination Management Plan and place branding strategy, the town is further developing its recreational food and drink experiences and using its unique stories to inspire imaginative public realm interpretation, cultural festivals and events.
- **Bosworth & Market Bosworth** – This area is rich in history as Bosworth Field was the site of the decisive battle of the War of the Roses between Richard III and Henry Tudor. The proposed Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail will connect all the places nearby that are associated with this key event and, along with the Bosworth Battlefield Visitor Centre, create a critical mass of visitor attractions to support the King Richard III story. Other key attractions in the area are Bosworth Water Park and the Ashby Canal. Market Bosworth has an attractive market square and streets filled with old pubs and coaching inns, thatched cottages and Georgian houses.
- **Loughborough and the Charnwood Countryside**– For those that enjoy the great outdoors there are plenty of walking opportunities in historic Bradgate Park, Beacon Hill Country Park, The Outwoods and around Swithland Reservoir. The area is also rich in heritage attractions with fascinating stories to uncover including the John Taylor Bell Foundry & Museum (the world’s largest working bell foundry which provides public tours), the WWI Carillon, the Great Central Railway (the UK’s only double track mainline steam heritage railway complete with period restorations at its stations) and the home of Ladybird Books at Charnwood Museum.
- **Everards Meadows & Fosse Park Visitor Hub** - Everards Meadows is a development that incorporates the new Everards brewery site and Rutland Cycling. It links with Fosse Park, one of the busiest out-of-town retail centres in the country, and nearby Marriott and Hilton Hotels to create a new visitor hub in the district of Blaby. Everards Brewery will celebrate over 170 years of local brewing heritage with a beer hall, brewery tours and a retail outlet at the site while Rutland Cycling provide retail and bike hire opportunities for visitors to enable them to explore Leicester and the surrounding area by bike



## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### ENABLERS

There are underpinning opportunities that we need to develop to support growth in the visitor economy.

#### ENABLER 1: PEOPLE & SKILLS

We need to further develop our workforce with the skills and enthusiasm to deliver outstanding service to visitors. The seasonal nature of tourism and anti-social hours of work often leads to a perceived low status for many jobs and poor perception of tourism and hospitality as a career choice. We have education providers to help those entering the industry to develop the skills we require but we need to support them by finding creative ways to inspire young people to see tourism as an exciting and rewarding industry with good career pathways providing opportunities to progress. We need the support of the sector to play its part in getting that message across to young people in full time education, as well as their families and careers advisors who influence their career choices, through quality encounters between young people and businesses and clearer employer engagement plans. Once in the education system, we need to support efforts to improve the work readiness of young people as part of a multi-partner approach. We also need to address the opportunities provided by an older workforce by supporting the updating of skills through re-training programmes as well as highlighting the flexibility of the sector for those working around caring responsibilities.

We will do this through:

- ▶ **Partnership working with the LLEP, Leicester Employment Hub, East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, local authorities, further education colleges, schools, professional bodies**
- ▶ **Supporting programmes of industry placements and school/industry partnerships (outreach programmes, careers talks, careers fairs) in collaboration with the Enterprise Advisor Network and Careers Hub**
- ▶ **Sharing industry success stories to personalise careers and bring the sector to life**
- ▶ **SME support for apprenticeship programmes for all and support for National Apprenticeship Week**
- ▶ **Learning from best practice exhibited elsewhere e.g. Institute of Hospitality and Careers Colleges, My Hospitality World**
- ▶ **Supporting the roll out of new T Levels in tourism and hospitality as part of a reformed skills training system**

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### ENABLER 2: CONNECTIVITY

#### Connectivity - Communication

We need to maintain effective strategic and operational partnerships to aid the success of the local visitor economy. This includes working closely with local, regional and national tourism organisations as well as with other DMOs, local authorities and private sector partners.

At a local level we need to encourage tourism businesses and other stakeholders to play their part in delivering the Tourism Growth Plan. To do this, stakeholders need to feel engaged and informed. The most effective way to do this is through the Tourism Advisory Board and local tourism partnerships and forums. These platforms play an important role in sharing communications with stakeholders, encouraging joint working and achievement of local sector plans, raising awareness of best practice and disseminating training and business development opportunities. We also need to continue to develop the Tourism Advisory Board (TAB) as a network of champions and ambassadors for growth and change in tourism, providing strong local leadership and commitment to overseeing the successful delivery of the Tourism Growth Plan ambitions.

At a regional and national level it is important we maintain effective strategic and operational partnerships to aid the success of the local visitor economy. Working with key partners such as East Midlands Airport and the Midlands Engine Tourism Partnership will support efforts to promote the Midlands region for tourism. At a national level, closer partnership working with Visit England and Visit Britain will support our efforts to market the destination to domestic and international audiences, improve our tourism product and provide us with access to sector intelligence.

We will do this through:

- ▶ **Support for local tourism plans and regular engagement with tourism partnerships and forums**
- ▶ **E-newsletters to businesses**
- ▶ **Local workshops to support delivery of Tourism Growth Plan priorities**
- ▶ **Ensuring TAB membership and meeting programmes support delivery of Tourism Growth Plan priorities**
- ▶ **Active engagement with regional and national tourism organisations to maintain the area's profile as a tourism destination and capitalise on funding, marketing and development opportunities to support delivery of the Tourism Growth Plan**

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### Connectivity – Getting Around

We are keen to support the efforts of local attractions to develop green travel plans. In addition to the environmental impact of cars, private vehicles cause congestion on local roads and parking issues for local residents and attractions alike. If we are to develop international visitors, many will rely on public transport to get around so improving the legibility of transport options and routes will help support our growth ambitions. Rural areas face particular challenges with connectivity with some attractions only accessible by car.

Delivering the Fit-cation campaign will rely on good walking and cycling networks that are safe and family friendly and we need to support efforts to develop this infrastructure. This will encourage the larger number of visitors who may not venture off the beaten track to consider a walking or cycling 'try-me' experience for a few hours in the countryside or urban areas.

We will do this through:

- ▶ **Supporting and signposting businesses wanting to improve visitor access by public transport or from footpaths and cycle ways to connect with relevant public sector departments or transport providers**
- ▶ **Encouraging businesses to promote green travel plans on websites and provide links to [www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk](http://www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk)**

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

---

### ENABLER 3: PLACES TO STAY

2018 data shows that visitors staying in serviced and non-serviced accommodation account for 4.6% of all visits and 22.2% of all visitor spend. Increasing the supply of accommodation therefore will have a significant effect on tourism spend. The LLEP Sector Growth Plan advocated further accommodation development to match supply to tourism experiences and to raise accommodation quality, both of which impact on growth.

Two of the ambitions of the Tourism Growth Plan are to convert more day visitors into staying visitors and achieve an upshift in average length of stay for business events. To achieve these ambitions we need to be sure we have the accommodation supply in the areas where we need it. We are developing a good base of evidence on accommodation development opportunities in East Leicestershire, Hinckley & Bosworth and North West Leicestershire (who are preparing a Visitor Accommodation Development Acceleration Plan). The National Forest Company are also formulating a Visitor Accommodation Development Strategy and Action Plan. Leicester is currently experiencing an increase in accommodation supply with two developments of 252 rooms currently under construction and potentially a further 900 rooms from new hotels or extension projects in the pipeline. This positions the city to act as a gateway to the wider area having the largest accommodation offer in the sub-region.

We can be more proactive in the development of places to stay by:

- ▶ **Working with the Invest in Leicester Inward Investment team to identify land and property owners, and the agents working on their behalf, that are interested in accommodation development and pitch opportunities to them**
- ▶ **Raising awareness of the accommodation development opportunities across the county through publications and property events**
- ▶ **Identify hotel and visitor accommodation developers that may be interested in Leicestershire and to match them to suitable local land and property owners**
- ▶ **Assessing opportunities for local authority owned sites and buildings and looking at potential for investment in hotel and visitor accommodation projects**
- ▶ **Building on the success of the LEADER programme by encouraging future funding streams to support diversification initiatives linked to accommodation development**
- ▶ **Mapping and promoting seasonally available accommodation released by the academic sector**
- ▶ **Marketing training and advice for small accommodation business owners**

## Appendix A: Tourism Growth Plan - Consultation Draft

### ENABLER 4: A FIRST CLASS WELCOME

Consumer expectations in relation to visitor welcome and service quality have never been higher. Visitors expect and demand quality in all aspects of their experience and if they don't perceive that they get it, will take to social media and customer review websites to share their views. In order to remain competitive the quality of our tourism offer must continue to develop and strive towards the attainment of excellence.

We can support businesses by raising awareness of quality assurance schemes that help them benchmark their offer against industry standards to achieve a more customer orientated approach to service delivery. We also need to ensure that post arrival, visitor needs are being taken into account regarding provision of services including wayfinding and signage to aid orientation, visitor-friendly car parking arrangements and maintaining the public realm to a high standard. If visitors have the best possible experience, they are more likely to return and make recommendations to friends and family. Research shows that there is a direct correlation between the quality of a visit and level of spend but just one weak link in the chain can undermine the whole visitor experience. Both public and private sectors need to work in partnership to get the overall experience right as the services and facilities visitors use during a visit are supplied by a number of providers.

We will do this through:

- ▶ **Supporting businesses to understand and appreciate the impact of digital marketing and social media**
- ▶ **Promoting awareness of the range of quality assurance schemes for accommodation, attractions and restaurants and encourage businesses to become accredited (Visit England and local tourism Awards for Excellence, Trip Advisor certificates of excellence, AA National Quality Assessment Scheme for accommodation, Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme, Green Tourism Scheme, Welcome Host etc.)**
- ▶ **Planning how to improve signage and information at key gateways including East Midlands Airport, railway stations and main car parks.**

In Leicester & Leicestershire, we want to make all our visitors feel welcome and ensuring we are an accessible destination is part of that. We need to ensure we meet the needs of our older visitors and those with disabilities by encouraging our businesses to understand and support their requirements. This will help us to remain competitive, maximise market opportunities and improve the quality of every visitor's experience.

We will do this through:

- ▶ **Encouraging businesses to share their accessibility information on their websites and marketing collateral**
- ▶ **Completing a destination access audit**
- ▶ **Running workshops and sharing information, tips and advice on how to help tourism businesses become more accessible.**

This page is intentionally left blank