

BRIEFING NOTE: High Peak Tourism Strategy Update

MEETING: Economy and Growth Committee – Thursday 18th January

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide a progress update on the Tourism Strategy and action plan for the High Peak. It also provides detail on UKSPF activity to support tourism and background on the Local Visitor Economy Partnership work with Visit Peak District, Derbyshire and Derby and Enjoy Staffordshire.

2. Background – Tourism Strategy

Context:

High Peak is a scenic landscape of hills, moorlands, woodlands, valleys and waterways, with small, characterful towns and villages. High Peak typically attracts some 5 million visitors each year.

Consultees suggest opportunities lie in:

- A new role for our distinctive towns and villages
- A focus on overnight stays among younger, active, family and cultural market segments
- Market development around walking, cycling, running, waterways, culture and events
- Greater range and improved quality of accommodation types

Vision:

Over the next five years High Peak will establish itself as a coherent, connected destination within the iconic brand of the Peak District. A place with a strong character defined by its geology, its industry and its people. A place to explore and try new things. A place with an authentic story to tell. High Peak is all of these things. The goal is better connectivity, better connection, better working together across High Peak and beyond – with a focus on giving visitors what they are looking for. Focusing on this will ensure a successful visitor economy, but this needs to be sustainable. The journey towards Net Zero carbon emissions will underpin High Peak's tourism sector for the benefit of residents, visitors, businesses and future generations.

Priorities for Growth:

The four areas of opportunity identified in the Strategy are:

Action Area 1 – Towns & Villages – creating destination hubs and reasons to linger

High Peak's towns & villages grow as destinations, attracting longer stays and more spend. This involves creating destinations & hubs, telling unique stories, providing a distinctive offer and giving reasons to linger.

Action Area 2 – Cycling and Walking – developing routes, trails, packages and events

Develop car free visits through cycling and walking to attract younger audiences and encourage longer stays and more spend. This will entail developing routes and trails to form loops and links which can support packages and itineraries and creating a signature event.

Action Area 3 – Creators & Makers – supporting events, workshops, courses and opportunities to buy

Build on the talents of creators and makers to extend and diversify High Peak’s visitor offer as well as supporting the cultural vibrancy of the towns & villages. We will support the creation, programming and promotion of events, workshops, courses as well as extend opportunities to sell local products.

Action Area 4 – Accommodation - extending the range and type

extend the range and choice of quality accommodation to attract new audiences to stay overnight. This will include encouraging distinctive, boutique, alternative forms of accommodation across High Peak.

Action Area 5 – Underpinning

Ensure the right kind of support is in place to deliver the Strategy and grow tourism sustainably, work in partnership with other organisations to influence, ensure alignment, efficiency and effective delivery of the Strategy and support for tourism sector.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating progress of the Strategy will be on the achievements within each of the Action Areas detailed above and the overall progress on outcomes as detailed in the five key performance indicators as shown in the table.

WHAT	HOW	WHY
Sector Growth (% annual increase in visitor spend)	Economic Impact Study e.g. STEAM, Cambridge	Once the national surveys recommence a target annual growth rate will be set to monitor progress and benchmark against other areas.
Proportion of visits that are ‘staying’ visits (overnight)	Visitor survey	Staying visits currently account for 10% of visits and 40% of spend. Growing staying visits will have a larger overall benefit to local communities.
Average length of stay and spend per visit (holiday visits)	Visitor survey	Longer stays and spend during a visit will contribute economic impact, business profitability and sustaining jobs.
Business Growth (% annual increase in turnover)	Local business survey	Monitors how businesses are doing overall as well as gathering intelligence on investment plans, challenges etc to inform policy.
Visitor Satisfaction (from a visit)	Sentiment research	Measures and tracks actual experience of visitors measuring satisfaction, likelihood of repeat visits and recommendations.

3. Tourism Strategy Progress Update

Tourism Partnership Forum

The aim of the Tourism Partnership Forum is to ensure that stakeholder and key organisations involved in High Peak’s visitor economy work together. It will aim to align priorities, programmes and activities, identify and take opportunities to enhance and build on what each organisation is doing, work to avoid duplication, and potentially establish new collaborations or projects which cut across geographical or organisational boundaries.

Cllr Damien Greenhalgh will chair the Forum and the Vice Chair will be appointed by the Board. The Forum will commence in Spring 2024; the Terms of Reference have been developed and a calendar of quarterly meetings to be agreed in the new year.

Areas of focus to include:

- Marketing
- Visitor management –including transport, dispersal, pressure points etc
- New capital or infrastructure developments
- Business support and engagement
- New funding streams, bids and opportunities for larger scale initiatives and projects

Membership of the Board:

- High Peak Borough Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Visit Peak District & Derbyshire
- Peak National Park Authority
- Vision Buxton
- Visit New Mills
- Buxton & Leek College

4. STEAM Data

STEAM stands for Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor. STEAM Data provides a destination with annual tourism data on areas such as visitor numbers, spend, overnight stays, numbers employed in tourism sector and importantly the economic impact of tourism to a Destination.

Headline results comparing 2021 with 2022 results:

- Number of visitors – 4.66 million in 2022 showing 16% increase on 2021 but a 7.5% decrease compared to pre pandemic figures (2019) of 5.04 million.
- Economic Impact of the visitor economy in 2022 - £299m, up by 27% on 2021. To compare this figure to pre pandemic figures (2019) for a more realistic comparison we have seen an increase of 4.5% on economic impact.
- Jobs (both direct and indirect) are up 18% on 2021 and up 3.3% on 2019 pre pandemic.
- There is a drop in serviced accommodation bed spaces – but self-catering is maintaining bedspace numbers – average length of stay – 2 nights for serviced and 7nights for non-serviced.

5. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

High Peak Borough Council has been allocated funding through the UKSPF for the purposes of:

- The development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit - £86,400 under Investment Theme E8
- The development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy - £136,388 under Investment Theme E17

VisitPeak District & Derbyshire (VPDD) were the successful consultant appointed to deliver the outcomes and outputs of the UKSPF which are set out in the tables below:

2023/2024

UKSPF Intervention	Number of people reached	Number of businesses receiving non-financial support
E8 Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit	2500	0
E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy	5000	5

2024/2025

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UKSPF Outcomes to date: Business Support

Six High Peak Creators and Makers were supported to attend Chatsworth Country Fair 1st – 3rd September 2023

- Bele Brownies – New Mills
- Eldon Candles @ Rushop Hall – Rushop
- Jo Harratt Fibre Art – Buxton
- Knotts & Crosses – Glossop
- Never Needlefelt Better – Bamford
- Treak Cliff Cavern - Castleton

Further planned activity includes:

- **‘Meet the Maker’ event planned for High Peak food and drink makers late Spring -** Working with the venue chef and selected suppliers we will devise a menu to showcase the local produce. Potential buyers from Peak District and Derbyshire will be invited to the dinner with opportunities for businesses to network and forge working relationships.

- **Build relationships within the creators and makers community** - consult closely with them to develop plans and the format for an event to be held in the Autumn to tie in with the Walking and Cycling Festival.

Marketing Activity

VPDD have been consulting a range of stakeholders (Walkers Welcome New Mills, Move More Glossop, Move More High Peak, Buxton Town Team, Vision Buxton, Buxton Opera House, Chapel-en-le-Frith Parish Council) to collate walking and cycling content.

Spoken to various stakeholders including Conducted an online workshop at the end of October, inviting representatives from all the target Market Towns.

They are preparing to have all this content uploaded onto VPDD website, including the campaign landing page by in the new year (2024).

'RH Advertising' have been jointly appointed by Enjoy Staffordshire and VPDD to run a marketing campaign. They have started to collate some video content and photography for key towns. The bulk of the photography and videography will be done in the new year when the weather improves and the Christmas decorations have gone to give the footage longevity. A consumer survey has been developed and will be shared on social offering a prize to encourage people to complete it. The results of this survey will help to shape marketing plans for the future.

The core marketing messages are set out below:

- Promote the festival events in High Peak September 2024.
- Showcasing the range of walks and cycle trails.
- Encouraging visitors to start their walks from key towns and villages, driving footfall to those high streets and raising awareness of 'hidden gems'.
- Highlighting the walking and cycling offer creating a campaign that can be shared with local businesses.
- Promote the destination as a great place to 'get active' - promoting the wellbeing and mindfulness benefits of outdoor activities.

The following monitoring will be undertaken as part of the activity:

- measure web searches, reach & engagement
- STEAM data to monitor visitor spending - spring 2024
- mobile data to monitor visitor numbers and footfall evidence

Key dates / milestones are set out below:

- Jan-Feb 2024 Toolkit will go out to businesses
- Mar 2024 Walking Festival launch
- Apr 2024 Digital marketing to start
- Jan-Mar 2025 Evolving walking festival branding and marketing collateral to include a wider outdoor offer

6. Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)

In 2023, VisitEngland approved Visit Peak District, Derbyshire and Derby to become an accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP).

As well as achieving a nationally recognised official status, LVEPs will provide strong leadership and management of their destinations, taking responsibility for the growth, prosperity and sustainability of the visitor economy. The partnerships will work together with the public and private sector and help shape and deliver national strategy and activities.

LVEP is a Partnership between the Destination Management Organisations and District / Borough Councils. It will work in collaboration locally, regionally and nationally on shared priorities and targets. Their mission is to support and grow the visitor economy through robust destination management, strong stakeholder relationships and clear planning.

Cllr Damien Greenhalgh, Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure is a member of the LVEP Board. A Destination Management Plan will be developed for the LVEP area to align with the election of a Mayor as part of the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority.

Moving forward, it will be a priority to link the HPBC Tourism Strategy, including the Tourism Partnership Forum, to the work of the LVEP.

