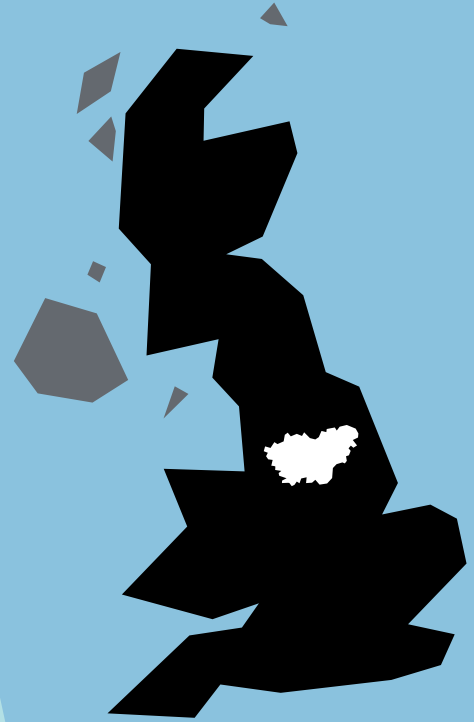


South Yorkshire Destination Management Plan

2024 - 2029



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**Local Visitor
Economy
Partnership**

Recognised by



VisitEngland

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE
SYMCA**



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Executive Summary

The visitor economy is already big business for us. Prior to the Covid pandemic (2019), it generated over £1 billion of direct expenditure annually to our economy. There are many positive changes taking place across South Yorkshire to add to this impressive statistic. We have achieved the status of a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) from VisitEngland – a recognition of our potential and importance as a visitor destination.

Across South Yorkshire we have significant strengths – our family and heritage attractions, our events and conference programmes, our connectivity. We have exciting opportunities with new developments and investments coming to fruition across the region.

This Destination Management Plan (DMP) provides a galvanising framework for the whole of South Yorkshire to move forward together, building on our collective and individual strengths. This plan focuses on the priorities and collaborative activities that, at a South Yorkshire level, will build a better and more productive visitor economy sector.

Our Visitor Economy

We have considerable strengths: flagship attractions, with strong clusters of family attractions and heritage attractions; our event venues (which are, in some cases, nationally unique) and events (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE), sporting, music, theatre and cultural, academic etc.); our conference tourism offer; Our location, with great road and rail access; and our experienced Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) teams (with good marketing collateral, momentum and trajectory), plus strong private sector engagement in most areas.

Our challenges include: low, and sometimes negative, place perceptions and awareness; the dispersed and homogenous nature of our destination (which impacts on the way people visit us); a general lack of resources

with destinations at different levels of capacity and development; a lack of a variety of accommodation in some areas; a lack of sizeable purpose built (or dedicated) conference facilities; a need for refurbishment of some key facilities; plus poor data and intelligence.

Amongst our exciting opportunities are: our Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status, enabling us to develop strong partnerships and co-ordination; being a key part of the Yorkshire brand; our recent and current capital developments (like Heart of the City, Glass Works) that are enhancing our offer; the potential for further development of some of our key attractions; and our events which represent an opportunity for the future.

Our Mission

Our mission is simple. We are investing in the development, marketing and management of the visitor economy to create and support profitable businesses and jobs in South Yorkshire.

There is great potential to grow our visitor economy – we have significant assets we can build on. However, to achieve long term growth in our visitor economy we need to address some of our key challenges. For example, we need:

- **A stronger visitor product with more compelling reasons for people to come (and to stay longer in the area);**
- **To improve how some of our towns and places look and feel; including how people perceive and use them – both residents and visitors;**
- **To improve our internal connectivity, particularly by public transport, enabling people to easily visit all of our key sites.**

Aims and Priorities

Underpinning our overarching mission, this Destination Management Plan has two primary aims:

- **To generate more (and longer) visits and spend in the local economy.**
- **To use the visitor economy to continue to develop and enhance the appeal and image of places in South Yorkshire to a range of audiences.**

And a third underlying aim:

- **To engage with our residents through development of our visitor economy and hospitality sector to enhance their pride and quality of life.**

These will be achieved through the delivery of five action areas (in no particular order):

- **Action Area 1: Develop our product and places**
- **Action Area 2: Increase awareness of our destinations**
- **Action Area 3: Develop specific reasons to visit**
- **Action Area 4: Enhance our transport provision and connectivity**
- **Action Area 5: Manage our visitor economy effectively.**

Strategic Drivers

A number of strategic drivers underpin these aims and priorities: developing our internal and external regional and local partnerships; developing new (and sustainable) resources to enable us to better compete; sustainability, accessibility and inclusivity will be central to everything we do and we will both embrace and celebrate all our diverse communities.



A Phased Approach

This DMP will be delivered and developed in two broad phases:

- **Phase 1: Foundations (2024-2026).** The plan will focus on building the foundations – developing our LVEP partnerships and delivery structures across South Yorkshire, implementing new programmes of activity using SYMCA funding and beginning to develop more sustainable funding and resources.
- **Phase 2: Development and Delivery (2027-2029 and beyond).** We will consolidate our partnerships, deliver sustainable funding streams, enhance our delivery and activities, and look to maximise our opportunities for growth.

Regional and Local Delivery

While there are commonalities and opportunities across our area, there are also significant differences. At a more local level, we often have different needs, priorities and agendas and our delivery for the visitor economy will reflect this.

Three broad types of intervention can be identified:

1. **Locally delivered, local impact** – these are projects delivered in one area (but possibly by multiple organisations) and that are likely to primarily benefit that area.
2. **Locally delivered, regional impact** – these are projects delivered in one area but will have impacts beyond that area – for example in terms of profile, visitor spend or access/connectivity.
3. **Regionally delivered, regional impact** – these are projects delivered across multiple areas of South Yorkshire (typically by a partnership of organisations) that impact across the area.

Action Areas

Action Area 1: Develop our Product and Places

We need to strengthen our product to broaden our appeal and audiences, developing more of a critical mass to attract visits for longer stays (and more spend). Key to this are major capital developments that either add something new to our offer or refresh it, improving its quality and relevance. There are numerous examples across South Yorkshire that we are progressing or will look to progress in the next five years. Some may have delivery timetables that will extend beyond this plan.

Places are also core to the visitor experience – they drive interest, satisfaction and spend. Across our area we have some great places with strong appeal. However, some of our places (including pockets of our city and town centres) have less appeal. Across our area there are a number of either recent or pipeline major capital developments that are making and will make a huge difference. To maximise the economic benefits from the visitor economy, this process of improvement and investment will need to continue, with the needs of visitors embedded into local regeneration plans, and place making initiatives.

We would benefit from both expanding the provision of accommodation right across the area but also diversifying the offer with more upmarket, destination and boutique establishments.

Action Area 2: Increase Awareness of our Destinations

There is mixed awareness of destinations in South Yorkshire and the components of our visitor economy offer. For visitors, South Yorkshire is probably not a brand or destination. In the eyes of the visitor, it is either one of our places (e.g. Sheffield, Doncaster etc.), our attractions (e.g. the Yorkshire Wildlife Park, or Magna), or an event. However, there are exciting opportunities to work together across a South Yorkshire geography. Elements of this include the development of consumer focused promotions that showcase the best of our collective offer and also opportunities around joint activity in some areas. Examples include: cross-marketing our areas; working together on public relations; and working with influencers.

Action Area 3: Develop Specific Reasons to Visit

Events and performances are fundamental to our visitor economy. Our events take many forms and have many different organisers but, in general, are organised and delivered at a district or local level by a range of players – our Local Authorities, trusts, sporting venues, cultural institutions, and attractions. It is a priority that this continues. However, at a South Yorkshire level, there are opportunities for collective work but these, it needs to be recognised, are subject to resources. Area wide opportunities include bidding, or trying to attract, major events to South Yorkshire – e.g. multi-site sporting or cultural events.

We have significant strengths in family attractions and a strong heritage and cultural attractions cluster. There are opportunities to develop consumer focused promotions that would generate added value over our current place based campaigns and activity. One will be consumer focused, targeting the family market, and a second potential campaign should focus on our heritage and cultural attractions offer working, initially, through group organisers and the travel trade.

Our key retail facilities such as Meadowhall and Lakeside Village are an important component in driving visits to the region. Whilst they are capable of generating their own markets, ensuring there are linkages to other attractions will be important.

Conference tourism is an important market group for us and will remain a priority – particularly in Sheffield – expansion of the Conference Ambassador Programme is an aspiration for the future.

Action Area 4: Enhance our Transport Provision and Connectivity

South Yorkshire is a large but polycentric conurbation; our product is dispersed and often located in our rural areas. Public transport (particularly for a visitor) can be a barrier. Addressing this is a long-term undertaking but one we should not collectively shy away from. In the short-term, we need to work with our existing provision and ensure

that it is more legible to visitors. SYMCA will be developing a new Local Transport Plan during 2024 which represents an opportunity to input the needs of visitors and the businesses they use.

South Yorkshire Airport City is a key piece of transport infrastructure that will benefit the region – in terms of business visitors and profile and we will look to maximise the planned reopening. To attract coach groups and other group trips we need to improve our on-the-ground provision of facilities – e.g. coach parking in our major attractions and town and city centres, drop points and driver facilities.

Our visitor welcome, in terms of physical orientation and signage is inconsistent. It requires reviewing and updating from the visitor perspective.

We are located on the Trans Pennine Trail and will look, in the medium term, to opportunities for active travel to add value to our visitor economy.

Action Area 5: Manage our Visitor Economy Effectively

Our visitor economy involves many players from the private, public and third sectors. Co-ordinating our activities and developing partnerships is a key priority for the delivery of this DMP. While stakeholder engagement will be primarily a responsibility of the LVEP partners at their respective levels, there may be a need for area wide co-ordination at the South Yorkshire level for specific activities.

Across South Yorkshire, LVEP partners provide an extensive business support offer. There is an opportunity, through our stakeholder engagement, to ensure that we make the connection between our existing support (including utilising VisitBritain's resources) and stakeholders. We should ensure the needs of our businesses are truly reflected.

Sustainability, (in terms of a wider move towards a net zero economy, but also considering a fair and just transition for our communities and residents), accessibility and inclusivity are core principles of this DMP. These will be partly-addressed through working with our stakeholders and businesses to raise awareness of the issues and barriers, provide solutions through e.g. showcasing good practice, VisitBritain's online resources,

and adoption of certification schemes like Green Tourism or Green Key.

Improving our intelligence and knowledge is also key to improving our destination management and to support our independent stakeholders with their plans. Currently the regional data picture is inconsistent. Early intelligence priorities at a South Yorkshire level will be about understanding our visitors (who they are, why they visit etc.) and how visitors and non-visitors perceive us. We also need to understand the dynamics and performance of our accommodation businesses, the performance of our attractions sectors and the overall impacts of the visitor economy.

Implementation

The South Yorkshire LVEP Governance Board will oversee the activities of the LVEP and the delivery of this DMP. The Board will bring together members from the public and private sectors. The LVEP will engage with SYMCA through its creative, culture and digital portfolio and with VisitEngland, VisitBritain and other LVEPs at a regional/national level.

We will also have a number of working groups to co-ordinate specific activities and agendas. These working groups will report to the board through the co-ordinator and the overview group (which will consist of the four Local Authorities plus SYMCA).

Our existing resources are limited, particularly in comparison to some of our main competitors. This impacts on our ability to deliver activity across the destination. We cannot realistically grow the visitor economy without additional investment. Our existing teams are already heavily committed delivering their own programmes. SYMCA have allocated funding over three years to fund the LVEP programme, some of which will fund a full time co-ordinator's post. Other items will include the data and intelligence programme and pilot marketing activity. The funds will allow the partners to deliver new activities, learn from them and develop a longer-term funding approach.





1. Introduction

The visitor economy is already big business for us. It is worth over £1 billion to the South Yorkshire economy. There are many positive changes taking place across South Yorkshire to add to these impressive statistics. We have achieved the status of a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) from VisitEngland – a recognition of our potential and importance as a visitor destination. The partnership across the four South Yorkshire Local Authorities and the Combined Authority sparks new opportunities and allows for a strategic, regional approach.

Across South Yorkshire we have significant strengths – our family and heritage attractions, our events and conference programmes, our connectivity. We have exciting opportunities with new developments and investments coming on stream right across the area; re-vamped town and city centres, new and expanding attractions, improving transport infrastructure and more.

However our visitor economy has faced and continues to face uncertainties and challenges – the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit, recruitment challenges, the cost of living crisis and inflation. Allied to these national concerns, we are a little known area whose products deserve better recognition.

This Destination Management Plan (DMP) provides a galvanising framework for the whole of South Yorkshire to move forward together, building on our collective and individual strengths. This plan focuses on the priorities and collaborative activities that, at a South Yorkshire level, will build a better and more productive visitor economy sector. It is intended to complement (but not duplicate) the more detailed plans that exist for our individual areas – Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, and Sheffield.



2. Current Situation

2.1 The Impacts and Benefits of the Visitor Economy

The value of our visitor economy is considerable. The following table summarises the estimated economic impact of the visitor economy to South Yorkshire in 2019 (the last full year of available data).

The Economic Impact of the Visitor Economy to South Yorkshire - 2019				
	Visits (m)	Nights (m)	Spend1 (£m)	% total spend
Domestic overnight	1.440	3.632	207	16%
International overnight	0.301	3.894	192	15%
All Overnight Visitors	1.741	7.526	399	31%
Tourism Day Visitors	27.291		889	69%
All Visitors	29.032		1,288	

Source: GBTS, IPS and GBDVS¹.

Our visitor economy, in 2019, generated nearly £1.3bn of direct expenditure. The majority of this was generated by day visits (from home) – 69% of expenditure (and 94% of trips).

This expenditure spreads far and wide – from our city centres to our local high streets and towns, and from direct spend on hospitality, retail, and entertainment, through the supply chain and - via the people employed in the sector - into numerous other areas.

Our visitor economy has a range of other benefits:

- **Enhances our image and profile – not just as a place to visit but also as a place to move to, work in, invest in, or study**
- **Supports a range of businesses (from micro to multi-national), jobs with different skills and creates entry level employment**
- **Develops a sense of place and pride among our communities and residents**
- **Supports a wide range of facilities that enhance the quality of life for our residents. This can include shops and high streets, restaurants, museums, theatres, attractions, walks and trails, events and festivals**
- **Can contribute to the regeneration of our cities, towns and villages – catalysing new developments and footfall.**

3

At a district level, local impact is available for Sheffield. At a Local Authority level, data is available from GBTS (domestic overnight), and GBDVS (day visitors) on volume of trips and spend, and from IPS (international visits) on trips (but not spend). Samples are small (especially at a Local Authority level) so the figures should be treated with some caution.

2.2 Our Markets

Our visitors come in many guises and for many reasons: a family visiting one of our great attractions; someone visiting for a gig, show or play; a shopper to our unique retail experiences; friends on a night out; a sports fan going to the football, racing or ice hockey; someone coming for work, business or a meeting; an international academic coming for a conference.

Markets to our destinations do vary (from the international to the relatively local) depending on the product mix and appeal.

Some key points about our visitors:

- **Day visitors are the largest group – they accounted for 94% of visits (and 69% of spend) in 2019.**
- **In 2019, visiting friends and relatives (VFR) accounted for the highest proportion of our overnight trips (48%) and spend (28%).**
- **Overnight holiday and leisure visits accounted for the same amount of spend (28%) as VFR in 2019 but less trips (26%). However, this market is not as well developed as other destinations in the UK. Holiday trips accounted for a quarter (27%) of our domestic trips and a fifth (20%) of international trips compared to an England average (of 47% and 41% respectively).**
- **We also underperform in overseas markets. In 2019 domestic visitors accounted for 83% of our overnight visitors with international visitors accounting for 17% (compared to 27% at an England level).**



2.3 Our Offer

There are over 7,100 hotel bedspaces in South Yorkshire with particular concentrations in Sheffield and Doncaster as the following table highlights:

Hotel Supply		
Area	No. of establishments	No. of rooms
Barnsley	12	769
Doncaster	28	1,775
Rotherham	14	1,081
Sheffield	32	3,482
South Yorkshire	86	7,107

Our hotels are supported by other types of accommodation – for example, we have over 700 caravan and camping pitches (with a particular concentration around Doncaster), and a range of short stay accommodation (with, e.g. over a 1,000 Airbnb lets in the Sheffield postcode area alone).

Hotels vary in standard. While the majority are economy (e.g. Premier Inn and Travelodge) and mid-scale brands (such as Leonardo, Mercure and Best Western) we do have a number of upscale and boutique hotels (like Radisson Blu, the Crown at Bawtry, the Leopold, Hellaby Hall Hotel, Brocco on the Park and Hilton Garden Inn) and bespoke experiences (like the Hex at Yorkshire Wildlife Park).

We have a strong product for visitors in a number of areas as the following diagram summarises. Particular strengths are in our visitor attractions – notably heritage, family and cultural – with some key players like the Cannon Hall Museum, Cannon Farm, Elsecar Heritage Centre, Wortley Hall (all Barnsley), Yorkshire Wildlife Park, Brodsworth Hall and Gardens (Doncaster), Gulliver's Valley, Magna (Rotherham), the Millennium Gallery (Sheffield) and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park which sits across the borders of West and South Yorkshire (Barnsley).

Our other core strength is in events of varying types; including sporting events, conferences and our own South Yorkshire events. These are a particularly strong source of overnight business – especially in Sheffield and Doncaster.

We have also an under-appreciated product depth in the countryside, nature and the outdoors with parts of the Peak District, good opportunities for outdoor activities (like climbing and cycling), access to the Trans Pennine Trail and feeder routes, and a number of nature reserves and country parks.



Across our area, we are seeing significant recent investment in visitor economy related developments. These include the Heart of the City (a major redevelopment of Sheffield city centre), the Glass Works (a transformational project in Barnsley town centre), Forge Island in Rotherham (cinema and hotel), Rother Valley and Thrybergh Country Parks and Parkwood Springs (outdoor recreation), investment in some of major attractions (Wentworth Woodhouse, Elsecar Heritage Centre, Magna, Yorkshire Wildlife Park) and hotels (for example, the Radisson Blu in Sheffield, plus the Hex Hotel at the Yorkshire Wildlife Park).

Proposals and funding bids for Wentworth Woodhouse continue to be progressed with the Stables, a major element of development of the offer. Similarly a number of other attractions (like the National Videogame Museum, National Emergency Services Museum Graves Gallery and Elsecar Heritage Centre) and a potential conference centre are exploring various development options.

A full list of current and proposed developments is summarised in appendix 2.

2.4 Current Delivery Arrangements

The visitor economy in South Yorkshire is complex and has many stakeholders. These include our Business Improvement Districts and Chambers of Commerce, trade organisations like the South Yorkshire Hospitality Association, and voluntary partnerships such as the Rotherham Pioneers.

Reflecting our product offer, there are also a huge range of individual operators, including our hotels, attractions, tours, conference venues, bars and restaurants, nightclubs, breweries, music venues, event organisers, transport operators, universities, our high streets and retailers. Some of these are wholly visitor focused, others have interests that overlap the visitor economy. We have a number of groups that help to bring these tighter – e.g. the Barnsley Visitor Economy Forum, the Doncaster Visitor Economy Group and the Rotherham Pioneers.

As an official Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP), we will work with our neighbouring areas, Visit Britain and Visit England on national (and international) promotional activities and development.

Each of our Local Authorities takes a lead on the visitor economy in their respective areas – effectively acting as the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) leading on leisure and (in some instances) conference tourism. The size of dedicated teams and their resources varies across our Local Authorities. Other functions within our Local Authorities also play a role in the visitor economy: running museums, galleries, parks, markets, venues; developing, managing and bidding for events; providing business and skills support; place management; and progressing regeneration and place development schemes.

The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority also interacts with the sector through different agendas, e.g. as the passenger transport executive for the region, business support and skills and employment functions, arts, culture and heritage, and research and intelligence.

Our Local Authority area based approach has resulted in differing priorities and historic levels of investment in the visitor economy – very much reflecting local needs. For example:

- **Barnsley has focused on broader culture and heritage (e.g. around Elsecar Heritage Centre), and the development of Barnsley town centre (particularly through the Glass Works) and its promotion. Promotion of the wider visitor economy has been more limited, the web presence for VisitBarnsley is part of the wider council website and focused on the town centre offer.**
- **Doncaster has a proactive approach to the visitor economy with a Tourist Information Centre and dedicated promotional team with a standalone destination website (VisitDoncaster). The focus is on Doncaster as a city wide offer for family days out, mini breaks and holidays, and business tourism.**

- Rotherham, in recent years, has concentrated more on its cultural and heritage offer with a focus on residents than external visitors. Destination promotion has been undertaken through a private sector led initiative (Rotherham Pioneers) with a website for the area (Yorkshire's Hidden Gems).
- Sheffield has a dedicated place marketing team (Marketing Sheffield) with a responsibility for promotion of the city for multiple agendas – invest, work, study and visit. On the visitor economy side, there is a dedicated place marketing and content team and website (under the Outdoor City identity). Sheffield has also a proactive conference bureau (with Ambassador programme) and a special projects role with a developmental remit for the visitor economy.

Across our area the visitor economy is included in a range of economic development and culture strategies albeit (see summary at Appendix C) only Sheffield and Doncaster having current, specific Visitor Economy Strategies/Destination Management Plans. There are a number of common elements arising from this range of strategies:

- A recognition of the link between culture, heritage and tourism and a desire to develop these further
- An emphasis on events: sporting, cultural and business/academic related
- Support for bringing together complementary products and offers to offer wider experiences to visitors, increasing both volumes and value (through e.g. extending the length of stay)
- A recent and proposed programme of investment in capital projects, town/city centre improvements and cultural facilities
- A clear consensus around supporting businesses in general but with varied profile and consideration of the visitor economy.



3. Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

3.1 Our Strengths

As a destination, we have considerable strengths:

- Flagship attractions, and strong clusters of family attractions and heritage attractions – often geographically very close (like Magna and Gulliver's Valley, and Elsecar Heritage Centre, Wentworth Woodhouse, Wentworth Castle Gardens, and Kelham Island, the National Videogame and National Emergency Services museums).
- Our event venues (which are in some cases, nationally unique) and events (MICE, sporting, music, theatre and cultural, academic etc.) which drive overnight business throughout the year and with particular concentrations in Sheffield and Doncaster (helping to support our accommodation sector).
- Our conference tourism offer – particularly in Sheffield (with a variety of venues, Conference Bureau and well-established Ambassador programme) and, to a lesser extent, Doncaster.
- Our location, with great road (M1, A1M, M18), rail access (especially Doncaster and Sheffield) and the developing tram Sheffield Supertram system.
- Our hospitality sector (with a good mix of independent and national brand restaurants, bars, and clubs).
- Retail, especially out of town (e.g. Meadowhall/Lakeside) and our independents.
- Experienced DMO teams with good marketing collateral, momentum and trajectory (albeit from different start points), and strong private sector engagement in most areas.

3.2 Our Challenges

However, we do face a number of challenges:

- Place perceptions and awareness – some areas have low awareness among consumers, and perceptions are sometimes negative (i.e. northern and industrial). South Yorkshire is a relatively meaningless concept to consumers (who tend to think of either Yorkshire or individual places/products/attractions like Sheffield, Wentworth Woodhouse or Doncaster Racecourse etc.).
- We are a polycentric and dispersed area. Our constituent parts are separate, and we are not a homogenous destination (which impacts on the way people visit, or do not visit, the area). Allied to this, public transport (outwith our main urban areas) can be a challenge for visitors.
- We also lack a critical mass of leisure product. While we have some clusters, these are of limited depth (compared to other potential destinations), constraining our short break appeal.
- A general lack of resources with destinations at different levels of capacity and development. Allied to this, our private sector is relatively small and finding sustainable funding to grow our visitor economy is a challenge moving forward.
- Some of our key performance and events venues have become 'tired' and in need of refurbishment to meet consumer expectations.
- While we have generally good hotel accommodation across the area, we lack variety in some areas and our range of boutique/high end prestige hotels is limited.

- We do not have sizeable purpose built (or dedicated) conference facilities which limits the events we can bid for. Some of our primary event venues need refurbishment and modernisation to move forward in the future.
- Our data and intelligence is poor – this limits our ability to make truly evidence based decisions and track our sector.

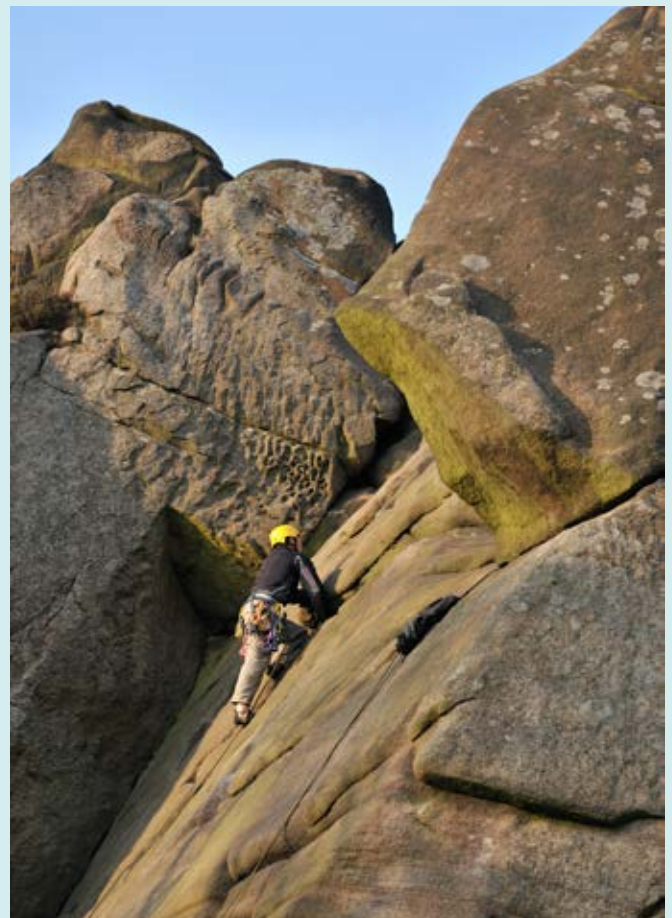
3.3 Our Opportunities

Looking forward, we have a number of exciting opportunities:

- Becoming an accredited LVEP for South Yorkshire formalises and strengthens the existing collaborative relationship of partners. LVEP status affords us the opportunity to develop strategic South Yorkshire approaches and build stronger partnerships, leading to better co-ordination (e.g. an events clash-diary, cross-selling products) and stronger economies of scale for certain activities (e.g. consumer focused marketing, research, product development, business support).
- We are a key part of the Yorkshire brand and see huge opportunities in continuing to work under the Yorkshire umbrella with our regional partners through the Yorkshire Tourism Initiative.
- Recent and current capital developments (like Heart of the City, Glass Works) that are enhancing our offer, and help to develop a new narrative and change perceptions.
- Further development of some of our key attractions – Wentworth Woodhouse, Elsecar Heritage Centre, the National Videogame Museum and Graves Gallery – which have huge potential to increase their visitor facilities, size and appeal to enhance our overall leisure offer.
- Building our clusters of attractions to develop consumer focused family and heritage campaigns (and the possible development of bookable products) with outdoor recreation as an emerging cluster (with e.g. the investment in our outdoor leisure product at

Rother Valley Country Park, Thrybergh and Parkwood Springs).

- The opportunity to leverage the presence of national organisations with access to significant consumer databases and brand loyalty (National Trust, English Heritage, RSPB).
- Events are a key strength for us and an opportunity for the future. The Children’s Capital of Culture in Rotherham is an example and represents a huge opportunity to raise our profile - regionally and nationally. There is also the exciting opportunity to collaborate more effectively, avoiding unnecessary competition and duplication, and plugging product and calendar gaps. In addition, we can proactively (and collectively) identify and bid for major events that have an area wide impact.



4. Our Strategy

4.1 Our Mission

Our mission is simple. We are investing in the development, marketing and management of the visitor economy to create and support profitable businesses and jobs in South Yorkshire.

There is great potential to grow our visitor economy – we have significant assets we can build on. However, to achieve long-term growth in our visitor economy we need to address some of our key challenges. For example, we need:

- **A stronger visitor product with more compelling reasons for people to come (and to stay longer in the area)**
- **To improve how some of our towns and places look and feel; including how people perceive and use them – both residents and visitors**
- **To improve our internal connectivity, particularly by public transport, to enable people to easily visit all of our key sites.**

In the shorter-term covered by this plan, we have the potential to:

- **Grow some of our key markets**
- **Develop specific reasons for people to visit and stay (through conferences, sports, events and packages)**
- **Start to change people's perceptions of South Yorkshire and its places**
- **Strengthen our offer and use the visitor economy as a catalyst in the regeneration of our places.**



4.2 Aims and Priorities

Underpinning our overarching mission, this Destination Management Plan has two primary aims:

- To generate more (and longer) visits and spend in the local economy.
- To use the visitor economy to continue to develop and enhance the appeal and image of places in South Yorkshire to a range of audiences.

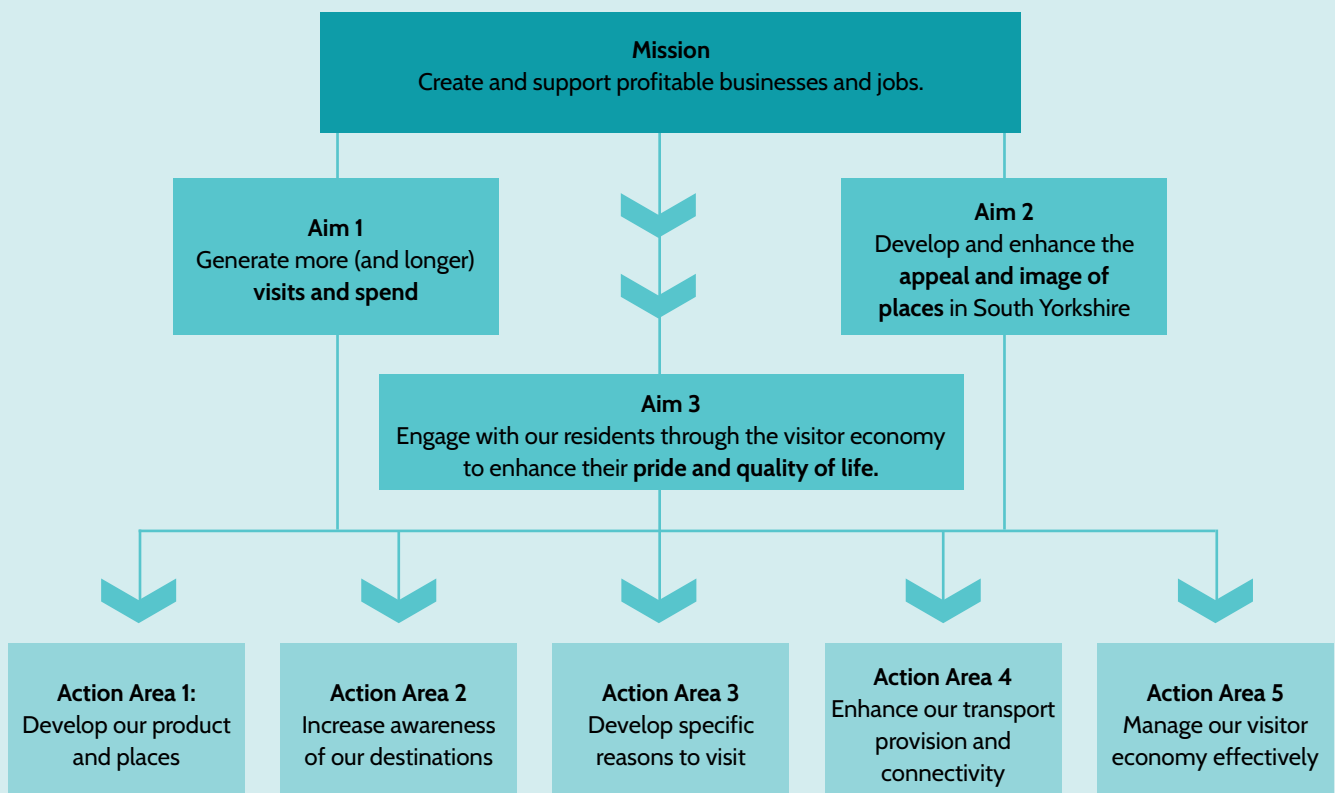
And a third underlying aim:

- To engage with our residents through development of our visitor economy and hospitality sector to enhance their pride and quality of life.

These will be achieved through the delivery of five action areas (in no particular order):

- Action Area 1: Develop our product and places
- Action Area 2: Increase awareness of our destinations
- Action Area 3: Develop specific reasons to visit
- Action Area 4: Enhance our transport provision and connectivity
- Action Area 5: Manage our visitor economy effectively.

These are summarised in the following diagram:



4.3 Strategic Drivers

Underpinning these aims and priorities, there are a number of strategic drivers. These include:

Regional and Local Partnerships - partnership will be key to the delivery of this DMP. We will strengthen partnerships at the national level with VisitEngland and VisitBritain through the South Yorkshire LVEP. The LVEP and the Yorkshire Tourism Initiative will form the basis of a stronger regional working relationship between our Local Authorities and the Mayoral Combined Authority, providing the foundation for delivery of many of the actions in this DMP (see sections 5 and 7). At a local level, we have individual partnership arrangements, and we will look to strengthen these to meet our local priorities.

Resources – at present, the resources to deliver an ambitious growth plan are not well enough developed or co-ordinated across our area. SYMCA have allocated a reasonable budget to kick-start our joint working over the next three years but, collectively and individually, we need to develop new (and sustainable) resources to enable us to compete with other destinations and grow our visitor economy. We will need to invest time in this process (see section 6).

Sustainability – sustainability will be central to everything we do - a fundamental part of the way we approach developing our visitor economy. Elements of this will include prioritising value over volume (through encouraging a greater length of stay and spend), encouraging efficient use of energy and resources among businesses and visitors, seeking to maximise retention of spend through local supply chains, encouraging use of public & active transport, spreading visitor benefits through the region's economy and communities, encouraging fair employment and good wages - whilst recognising and mitigating against negative impacts on our communities and natural environment.

Accessibility, Inclusivity and Diversity – we will work towards a shared vision of making South Yorkshire a truly accessible and welcoming destination for all. We will, where possible, make our marketing and communications, place and partnership working accessible to all and work with our partners to raise awareness of the social and legal obligations to provide services and facilities that are accessible. We will encourage the development and promotion of accessible information, business and product development, customer service and physical facilities throughout the region.



Target Market Groups.

We have many markets and different types of visitors. The core ones that we will proactively focus on (through either regional or local activity) will be:

Market Group	Description
Events	<p>We have venues that host 'performance' events and have some excellent events that are South Yorkshire 'owned' – e.g.– Tramlines. These generate business and profile for our destinations. We have an opportunity to work together to attract more 'bid for' events, both sports and cultural.</p> <p>Each event has a different market, but we need to build on these and develop their profile to help build awareness and develop reasons to visit in the off-season.</p>
Conferences	<p>Conferences are primarily a Sheffield market (with some provision in Doncaster), conferences positively impact in many ways – spend, profile, and potential investment. We will focus on multi-day conferences that attract national (and international) delegates and corporates.</p>
Families	<p>Families with younger children (12 and less) will be a key target audience at a South Yorkshire level with a focus on our great attractions. These will primarily be from a 'region plus' catchment and coming for day visits but also potentially for short breaks.</p> <p>VisitEngland Project Lion Equivalent: Aspirational Family Fun.</p>
Early retired/ empty nester	<p>Older age groups (primarily 60+) with an interest in heritage, arts/culture, gardens, 'soft' outdoors (and retail) are also a target audience at a South Yorkshire level (albeit a secondary one). The organised group market – coming through tour operators and coach companies, or societies and clubs – presents one practical way to reach this group.</p> <p>VisitEngland Project Lion Equivalent: Country Loving Traditionalists.</p>
Visiting friends and relatives	<p>Our VFR market is an important, but secondary, audience – typically with a lower spend. The focus is less on promoting reasons to visit but more showcasing the breadth of the South Yorkshire offer when they are here.</p> <p>VisitEngland Project Lion Equivalent: Aspirational Family Fun and Fuss-Free Value Seekers.</p>
Our residents and local visitors	<p>Residents and local visitors are an important market, particularly for our town and city centres and attractions. They are less of a focus at a South Yorkshire level but will be an important part of the market mix locally.</p>

4.4 A Phased Approach

This DMP will be delivered and developed in two broad phases:

- **Phase 1: Foundations (2024-2026).** The plan will focus on building the foundations – developing our LVEP partnerships and delivery structures across South Yorkshire, implementing new programmes of activity using the SYMCA funding and beginning to develop more sustainable funding and resources.
- **Phase 2: Development and Delivery (2027-2029 and beyond).** We will consolidate our partnerships, deliver sustainable funding streams, enhance our delivery and activities, and look to maximise our opportunities for growth.

4.5 Regional and Local Delivery

While there are commonalities and opportunities across our area, there are also significant differences. At a more local level, we often have different needs, priorities and agendas and our delivery on the visitor economy will reflect this.

Three broad types of intervention can be identified:

1. **Locally delivered, local impact** – these are projects delivered in one area (but possibly by multiple organisations) and that are likely to primarily benefit that area.
2. **Locally delivered, regional impact** – these are projects delivered in one area but will have impacts beyond that area – for example in terms of profile, visitor spend or access/connectivity.
3. **Regionally delivered, regional impact** – these are projects delivered across multiple areas of South Yorkshire (typically by a partnership of organisations) that impact across the area.

This is a framework that we pick up in subsequent sections of this plan. The following table provides some examples of potential projects within these categories:

Category 1: Locally Delivered Local Impact	Category 2: Locally Delivered Regional Impact	Category 3: Regionally Delivered Regional Impact
Town/city centre regeneration	Major visitor developments – e.g. Wentworth Woodhouse	Major multi-site events
Local events/animation	Coach friendly measures – parking, facilities	Regional intelligence programmes
Conference tourism sales and marketing	Transport Infrastructure – e.g. South Yorkshire Airport City	Thematic and/or consumer focused marketing (e.g. family, group)
Place-based leisure marketing	Major events (e.g. Children's City of Culture)	Public relations and influencers



5. Action Areas

The following sections outline our five action areas. It should be noted that these overlap to some extent but they all contribute to delivering our mission and achieving our aims. For each Action Area we outline the rationale for why this is important and the longer-term aspirations and needs. We also outline some of the actions that will be taken forward during the DMP period.

5.1 Action Area 1: Develop our Product and Places

We have some great venues and events (in the widest sense) that bring in a range of visitors (see action area 3) with specific interests. However, as a destination (or set of destinations), we need to strengthen/enhance our product to broaden our appeal and audiences and develop more of a critical mass to attract visits for longer stays (and more spend).

Key to this are major capital developments that either add something new to our offer or refresh it to improve its quality and relevance. The following table outlines potential capital projects that we are progressing or will look to progress in the next five years. Some may have delivery timetables that will extend beyond this plan.

These are projects that will be locally delivered and have either local or regional impacts – depending on their scale and potential appeal. Examples (and this is not an exhaustive list) include:

Market theme /group ¹	Project
Event²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Trust venues e.g. the Utilita Arena and Ponds Forge (Sheffield) • Purpose built conference centre (Sheffield)
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrodome (Barnsley) • The Dome (Doncaster) • Yorkshire Wildlife Park (Doncaster) • Magna (Rotherham) • National Videogame Museum (Sheffield) • National Emergency Services Museum (Sheffield)
Heritage/culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brodsworth Hall (Doncaster) • Cannon Hall Gallery (Barnsley) • Elsecar Heritage Centre (Barnsley) • Graves Gallery (Sheffield) • Wentworth Woodhouse (Rotherham)
Outdoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hayfield Lane Rural Leisure Centre (Doncaster) • Rother Valley Country Park (Rotherham) • Parkwood Springs outdoor leisure (Sheffield)

1. The broad market group that the development will appeal to (albeit there is a recognition that a product can appeal to multiple markets).

2. An 'event' here refers primarily to a venue that can host an event or performance – whether it is sporting, arts/cultural, or conference/business.

Places are also core to the visitor experience – they drive interest, satisfaction and spend. Across our area we have some great places with strong appeal, a sense of place, ambience and an infrastructure that generates spend. However, some of our places (including pockets of our city and town centres) have less appeal and are blighted by issues that impact on many of the UK's towns and cities – anti-social behaviour, poor perceptions and safety concerns, slightly run-down high streets with declining footfall, a functional retail offer, and a bland bar/restaurant offer. This is a 'chicken and egg' situation – while the visitor economy can play an important part in this regeneration of our places it cannot work in isolation – people will not visit an uninviting place.

Across our area there are a number of either recent or pipeline major capital developments that are making and will make a huge difference – for example, the Glass Works in Barnsley, Danum Gallery, Library and Museum and the civic quarter in Doncaster, Forge Island in Rotherham, and Castlegate in Sheffield. There are some other excellent initiatives taking place – e.g. Sheffield's Neighbourhood improvement programme that will help to strengthen the appeal of different areas of the city (beyond the centre), the work of our BIDs and City and Town Centre Management teams in creating footfall, animation and ambience, and safe, clean places for visitors and residents alike; the spirit of our entrepreneurs developing exciting food and drink outlets. To maximise the economic benefits from the visitor economy, this process of improvement and investment will need to continue as our residents and visitors become ever more demanding and have increasing options. The needs of visitors should be embedded in local regeneration plans, and place-making initiatives (including attractive gateways, transport, signage, interpretation, urban realm, regeneration, and animation).

We have a good, varied accommodation stock in Sheffield city centre and in Doncaster city centre (albeit to a lesser extent) with new stock coming on stream in e.g. Sheffield and Rotherham. We would benefit from both expanding the provision of accommodation right across the area but also diversifying the offer with more upmarket, destination and boutique establishments. However, opportunities need to be tested – e.g. our hotel rates are relatively low in comparison to other areas and there is a danger of over-supply - through an assessment of our current provision and demand, gaps, opportunities for growth and potential interventions.

Actions

Action	Description	Phase
Capital projects	Deliver capital projects that are in progress	Foundation/ Development
	For proposed projects progress relevant feasibility work, develop funding packages, secure	Foundation/ Development
City / town centres	Ongoing regeneration and animation	Foundation/ Development
Accommodation	South Yorkshire accommodation performance and investment study	Development

5.2 Action Area 2: Increase Awareness of our Destinations

Rationale and Approach

There is mixed awareness of destinations in South Yorkshire and the components of our visitor economy offer. Elements of our offer are well-known with a strong reputation but many perceptions of the area are simply neutral or just limited, and for some negative.

For visitors, South Yorkshire is probably not a brand or destination. In the eyes of the visitor, it is either one of our places (e.g. Sheffield, Doncaster etc.), our attractions (e.g. the Yorkshire Wildlife Park, Magna or the Metrodome), or an event (e.g. the St. Leger, Tramlines). As places, our brands, priorities, historic investment and audiences vary – trying to develop a joint place brand would be difficult (and expensive). As such, we will continue to develop separate place marketing approaches for our main areas.

However, there are exciting opportunities to work together across a South Yorkshire geography, including leveraging our locally based national partners. Elements of this include the development of consumer focused promotions that showcase the best of our collective offer (see Action Area 3) and also opportunities around joint activity in some areas.

For example, our resident audience of South Yorkshire presents a significant opportunity to further grow the value of tourism, through a more formal approach to the

cross-marketing of experiences and events between our individual destinations. This approach offers important benefits:

- **It extends the reach of local experiences and events and ensures greater inclusivity for South Yorkshire’s resident population.**
- **It amplifies the existing work done by our individual destinations.**
- **It taps into the sizeable ‘Visiting Friends and Relations’ (VFR) market, increasing the range of products and experiences for VFR visitors.**

Moving forward, we will look to create a formal cross-marketing network that identifies the criteria, process and channels each destination can use to promote neighbouring areas to its local resident population (on a reciprocal and equitable basis).

A key priority for our stakeholders is the image and awareness of South Yorkshire. Public relations and working with influencers can address this and is also an area where there are significant potential economies of scale for South Yorkshire (and possibly beyond) working – particularly around common themes – like family and heritage/culture offers rather than a place based or single destination approach. We will bring together the best of our offer and pursue communication channels that will convey a new impression of South Yorkshire’s assets to target markets.

Actions

Action	Description	Phase
Place-marketing	Continued place marketing campaigns for our respective areas	Ongoing
Cross-marketing	Programme of cross marketing of our destinations using each other’s marketing collateral	Foundation/Development
PR/influencers	Ongoing campaign focusing on showcasing the South Yorkshire offer and securing coverage	Foundation/Development

5.3 Action Area 3: Develop Specific Reasons to Visit

Rationale and Approach

Events and performances are fundamental to our visitor economy. Participants and organisers in sports events fill our hotel bedrooms and restaurant tables. Attendees to gigs, festivals and concerts, our performing arts and cultural events contribute massively to business levels across our area – generating footfall and spend. Events bring people into the region who might not otherwise have visited South Yorkshire or our destinations. They showcase the area, support our brand(s) and profile, and typically enhance the quality of life for our residents by providing opportunities to be involved.

Our events take many forms and have many different organisers – we have had high-profile, multi-destination events like the Tour de Yorkshire, Women's Euros. We have annual district or city wide events like the St. Leger, World Snooker. We have major, high profile events in the pipeline like the Children's Capital of Culture in Rotherham in 2025.

In general, our events are organised and delivered at a district or local level by a range of players – our Local Authorities, trusts, sporting venues, cultural institutions, and attractions. It is a priority that this continues with investment in programming, venues (see Action Area 1), and support in destination related marketing (Action Area 2).

At a South Yorkshire level, there are opportunities for collective work but these, it needs to be recognised, are subject to resources. Area wide opportunities include bidding, or trying to attract, major events to South Yorkshire – e.g. multi-site sporting or cultural events. We will continue to investigate these as opportunities arise and develop appropriate mechanisms to act quickly and decisively (see section 6 on Implementation).

We lack a signature international scale cultural event (like Liverpool's Biennial or Manchester's International Festival). While there is a potential opportunity to develop something like this, possibly as a legacy of Children's

Capital of Culture or at Wentworth Woodhouse (where there is a preference for temporary international standard events). These would require careful consideration and there may be significant challenges in terms of viability and potential resourcing.

Across South Yorkshire, we have significant strengths in family attractions and a strong heritage and cultural attractions cluster. There are opportunities to develop consumer focused promotions that would generate added value over our current place-based campaigns and activity.

One will be consumer focused, targeting the family market (i.e. groups with children aged up to about 12), and showcasing our great attractions through a campaign that involves multiple-strands – web, social media, PR and influencer. There may be also scope to package the attraction offer with accommodation (building on potential weekend hotel capacity) to develop bookable product with potential distribution through Tourism Exchange GB (TXGB) and other channels and create a greater economic impact for the area.

A second potential combined South Yorkshire campaign should focus on our heritage and cultural attractions offer (and possibly other products with appeal to a more mature audience – e.g. nature reserves, distinctive retail experiences like markets). Initially working through group organisers and the travel trade, including the development of 24/48 hour itineraries – again possibly bookable – will be important. This would be a business-to-business campaign focused on direct sales, exhibitions supported by appropriate (web-based) collateral. Allied to marketing, there is also a need to improve our on-the-ground provision for coach and group trips (see Action Area 4).

In addition to marketing, the clusters could consider their needs in data and intelligence (especially sharing existing research), equipment banks/sharing, shared recruitment initiatives etc.

Conference tourism is an important market group for us – business tourism generates about a fifth of staying visitor spend in South Yorkshire. In 2022, for example, conference tourism in Sheffield was estimated to have generated 11,500 conferences and meetings,

approximately 590,000 delegates and £74.5m of direct expenditure. Conference Sheffield is the only dedicated business tourism body in the region with marketing effort and activity (including sales and a proactive Ambassador Programme). It is largely focused on Sheffield with some venues from Barnsley and Rotherham. Doncaster also features its conference offer on its destination website but does not have such a proactive bureau approach.

With conference buyers generally focusing on individual destinations (or venues), current arrangements remain the most appropriate way forward and a priority – particularly for Sheffield. Expansion of the Conference Ambassador Programme is an aspiration for the future.

Actions

Action	Description	Phase
Events	Development of area wide targets and resources, and bidding mechanisms	Development
	Assess potential of signature events	Development
Cluster Development (family)	Develop a cluster of family-based attractions and associated consumer campaign	Foundation/Development
	Explore options for the development of bookable packages (hotels and attractions)	Development
Cluster Development (heritage)	Development of a cluster of heritage and cultural attractions and a group-based campaign	Foundation/Development
	Explore bookable product/itineraries	Development
Conference	Ongoing conference sales and marketing programmes	Ongoing



5.4 Action Area 4: Enhance our Transport Provision and Connectivity

Rationale and Approach

South Yorkshire is a large but polycentric conurbation; our product is dispersed and often located in our rural areas. While getting better in places (particularly with the Sheffield Supertram system serving major visitor facilities like Meadowhall and Magna - from 2025 - and new bus services to Elsecar Heritage Centre), public transport (particularly for a visitor) can be a barrier. Addressing this is a long-term undertaking but one we should not collectively shy away from. In the short term, we need to work with our existing provision and ensure that it is more legible to visitors. Tying into our core principles of sustainable, accessible and inclusive visitor economy development, we need to focus on both promoting but also developing easy public transport connectivity to our core experiences and integrating them into our destination marketing (see Action Area 2). SYMCA will be developing a new Local Transport Plan during 2024 which represents an opportunity to input the needs of visitors and the businesses they use.

Actions

Action	Description	Phase
Public transport	Embed the needs of visitors within wider public transport planning and provision	Foundation/Development
South Yorkshire Airport City	Explore visitor opportunities	Development
Group travel	Assess and improve group travel provision for each area	Development
Orientation	Review signage and wayfinding for each area	Ongoing
Active Travel	Review potential for TPT and other active pursuits	Development

South Yorkshire Airport City is a key piece of transport infrastructure that will benefit the region – in terms of business visitors and profile and we will look to maximise the planned reopening.

To attract coach groups and other group trips we need to improve our on-the-ground provision of facilities – e.g. coach parking in our major attractions and town and city centres, drop points and driver facilities. These need to be reflected in our itineraries (see Action Area 3) and, in some instances, will require on-the-ground work, like signage and parking provision, which we will look to progress through the emerging Local Transport Plan.

Our visitor welcome, in terms of physical orientation and signage is inconsistent – good in some areas, poorer in others. It requires reviewing and updating from the visitor perspective to take account of new developments and should be incorporated into major regeneration and development schemes.

We need to better understand the potential benefits of being part of the cross country Trans Pennine Trail, a major national cycling route, headquartered in Barnsley, and will investigate how to maximise that potential, as well as the wider possibilities of active travel.

5.5 Action Area 5: Manage our Visitor Economy Effectively

Rationale and Approach

Our visitor economy is complex. It involves many players from the private, public and third sectors. Co-ordinating our activities and developing partnerships is a key priority for the delivery of this DMP. There are numerous partnerships that link to the visitor economy and these typically exist at a district or local level. Our engagement will continue on this basis, but we recognise we need to be more proactive as we emerge from the Covid years. While stakeholder engagement will be primarily a responsibility of the LVEP partners at their respective levels, there may be a need for area wide co-ordination at the South Yorkshire level for specific activities. Initially, we will look to organise two events each year, inviting all stakeholders across the LVEP geography.

Engagement and developing relationships with stakeholders will help us develop campaigns (see above), creating the opportunities and the means to deliver a range of other priorities (see below).

Across South Yorkshire, LVEP partners provide an extensive business support offer. SYMCA's Growth Hub, which is regionally managed, acts as an entry point into the business support eco-system for businesses and entrepreneurs across the region. This focuses on supporting both new businesses and existing businesses in a number of areas – e.g. growth, finance, skills, and innovation. SYMCA also delivers the Adult Skills Fund for South Yorkshire, to engage adults and provide them with the skills needed for entering and sustaining work, an apprenticeship or other learning. Other organisations – e.g. our Local Authorities, and Chambers of Commerce – provide business support in differing and varying ways. Existing regional and local business and skills support touch on the visitor economy in varying ways. There is an opportunity, through our stakeholder engagement, to ensure that we make the connection between our existing support (including utilising VisitBritain's resources) and stakeholders. However, we should ensure the needs of our businesses (and these needs will often vary depending on business size and type, and ownership) are truly reflected. We will investigate options with stakeholders where appropriate – examples include recruitment (arguably a more pressing issue than skills) and the development of tailored training courses that address particular needs to be delivered at a South Yorkshire or local area. Work by the Rotherham Pioneers on potential staff sharing schemes provides an innovative approach to addressing recruitment issues.

Sustainability, (in terms of a wider move towards a net zero economy, but also considering a fair and just transition for our communities and residents), accessibility and inclusivity are core principles of this DMP. These will be partly-addressed through our transport and connectivity action area (see Action Area 4 above) but also by working with our stakeholders and businesses to raise awareness of the issues and barriers, provide solutions and facilitate their own implementation through e.g. showcasing good practice, VisitBritain's online resources, and adoption of certification schemes like Green Tourism or Green Key. Developing our stakeholder relations will again be key to this element. As destinations we will look at our own accreditation – e.g. Sheffield, as part



of the Core Cities Group, has signed up to the Global Sustainability Index.

Improving our intelligence and knowledge is also key to improving our destination management and to support our independent stakeholders with their plans. Currently the regional data picture is inconsistent. For example, we have conference performance data from the UK Conference and Meeting Survey, occupancy and Airbnb data for plus economic impact modelling data for Sheffield but limited data for the rest of the area. Early intelligence priorities at a South Yorkshire level

will be about understanding our visitors (who they are, why they visit etc.) and how visitors and non-visitors perceive us. We also need to understand the dynamics and performance of our accommodation businesses – not only from the perspective of potentially developing new accommodation but also to help monitor performance – the performance of our attractions sectors and the overall impacts of the visitor economy.

Developing and evolving our LVEP will be a key priority – it will be an enabler of action delivery (see section 6 below).

Actions

Action	Description	Phase
Private sector engagement	Develop private sector engagement at most appropriate geography, and develop South Yorkshire co-ordination and relationships	Foundation/Development
Business Support and Recruitment / Skills	Research and identify business needs and explore options for intervention where required	Foundation/Development
Sustainability, accessibility and inclusivity	Showcase and rollout of national schemes and good practice through existing networks	Foundation
Development	Review signage and wayfinding for each area	Ongoing
Intelligence	Establish regional group to develop consistent approaches to data and invest in accommodation related data and perceptions/target market research	Foundation / Development
LVEP	Development and evolution of delivery structures	Foundation

6. Implementation

6.1 Our LVEP Partnership and Responsibilities

The South Yorkshire LVEP Governance Board will oversee the activities of the LVEP and the delivery of this DMP. The Board will bring together members from the public and private sectors with an interest in the region's visitor economy, drawn from our Local Authorities and destination partnerships, with an independent chair. The LVEP will engage with SYMCA through its creative, culture and digital portfolio and with Visit England, Visit Britain and other LVEPs at a regional/national level.

Our LVEP is a partnership of equals, but that partnership will need co-ordination. Marketing Sheffield will undertake that role and host the co-ordinator, also acting as the accountable body for the SYMCA funds.

We will also have a number of working groups to co-ordinate specific activities and agendas (see organogram below). These working groups will report to the board through the co-ordinator and the overview group (which will consist of the four Local Authorities plus SYMCA). Our partnership is relatively new, experience will dictate the eventual structure and we will keep it under regular review. Each group will be chaired by the most appropriate individual or partner. If appropriate this will be a member of the overview group or activity reporting will take place from the chair. Initial focus areas are expected to be as follows.

Overview Group:

Responsible for agreeing the agenda for the LVEP itself, overseeing the delivery of this DMP and the Growth Action Plan (including the work of the subgroups). The Group will also take an overview of strategic initiatives e.g. the accommodation development programme, heritage and cultural projects, PR and comms and cross marketing (and will develop a process and criteria for sharing our existing channels and routes to market in an equitable and effective manner).

Data and Intelligence:

This group will co-ordinate the combined effort to transform our understanding of both our customers and the performance of our sector, commissioning research and data across South Yorkshire, to ensure consistent and comparable evidence to support the LVEP's work.

Events:

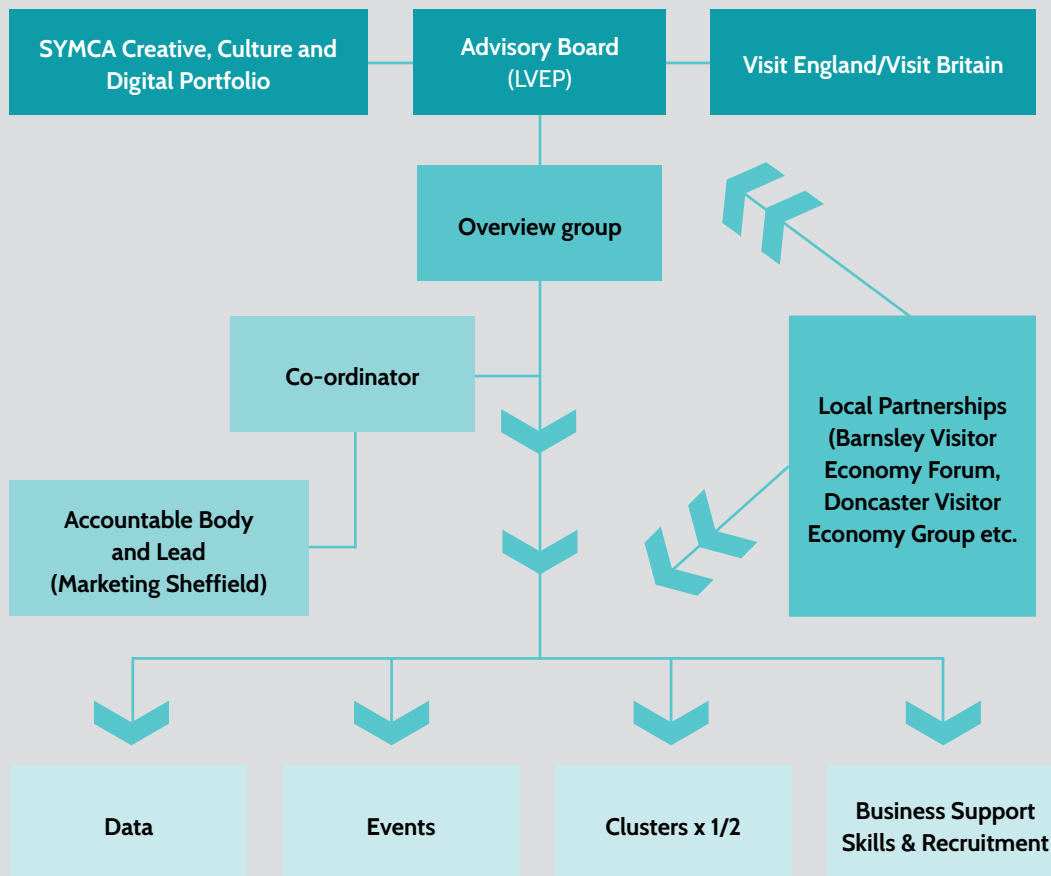
This group will lead on the crucial events programme for the area. It will look to minimise competition, identify shared opportunities, maintain a clash diary, plug product and calendar gaps, develop shared bids for major external events and act as a forum to consider the growth potential of locally organised events. The group will also work with key partners e.g. the primary venues, Sports bodies etc. on developing the event programme for the region.

Cluster groups will lead on a co-ordinated approach to developing the family market and the heritage cluster. In the first instance this is likely to be focused on joint marketing programmes but could consider other issues such as skills and training needs, equipment sharing etc.

Business Support/Skills & Recruitment:

this group will lead on co-ordinating the region's visitor economy business support agenda. This will involve making the linkages between visitor economy operators and existing provision, identifying needs and gaps, sharing (and expanding good) practice.





6.2 Investment and Funding

Our existing resources are limited, particularly in comparison to some of our main competitors. This impacts on our ability to deliver activity across the destination. We cannot realistically grow the visitor economy without additional investment. Our existing teams are already heavily committed delivering their own programmes. SYMCA have allocated £500,000 over three years to fund the LVEP programme, some of which will fund a full time co-ordinator's post. Other items will include the data and intelligence programme and pilot marketing activity. The funds will allow the partners to deliver new activities, learn from them and develop a longer term funding approach.

7. Action Plan

7.1 Introduction

The following section outlines an action plan, building on the Action Areas in Section 5. These are actions that will generally have significant and direct impact on the visitor economy in South Yorkshire. Actions by individual partners, and smaller groups of e.g. one or two are not included.

The action plan is tabular, and each project has been allocated as a High or Medium priority. High priorities are considered essentials, whilst medium priorities are desirable. Projects have also been given a category, depending on their anticipated impact and deliverer scope (see section 4.5).

The table is broken down into the five action areas identified in Section 5. The level of resources that are ultimately available will determine which projects are undertaken.



The key to the following action plan is:

Lead Responsibility:

- LVEP - South Yorkshire Local Visitor Partnership
- BMBC - Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- BPL - Barnsley Premier Leisure
- CDC - City of Doncaster Council
- RMBC - Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- SCC - Sheffield City Council/Marketing Sheffield
- SYMCA - South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

Project Category:

- 1 - Locally-delivered, local impact
- 2 - Locally-delivered, regional impact
- 3 - Regionally-delivered, regional impact

Priority:

High - must do/essential

Medium - desirable

For locally delivered projects for multiple areas this might be either medium or high depending on local priorities.

Phase:

This indicates when a project is likely to be undertaken.

- **Foundation** - (2024-2026), with a further yearly breakdown
- **Dev** - Development and Delivery (2027+)

Timescales will be brought forward or pushed back depending on resources.

- - project delivery phase
- - potential delivery phase – depending on variable factors (funding and resources, feasibility etc.)

Actions

Project	Description	Project Category	Priority	Lead body	Phase	
					Foundation	Development
Action Area 1: Develop our Product and Places						
Capital Developments	City Trust venues e.g. the Utilita Arena and Ponds Forge (Sheffield) – continue to pursue refurbishment and re-development options	1	High	SCC/ Sheffield City Trust	●	●
	Purpose built conference centre (Sheffield) – progress feasibility study and, subject to that develop potential plans and funding options	2	Medium	SCC	●	○
	Purpose built conference centre (Doncaster) – explore potential opportunities for new provision	2	Medium	CDC	●	●
	Metrodome (Barnsley) – investigate development/refurbishment options and funding	2	Medium	BPL	●	○
	The Dome (Doncaster) – investigate development/refurbishment options and funding	1	Medium	CDC	●	○
	Magna (Rotherham) – completion of current investment programme	1	High	Magna	●	○
	National Videogame Museum (Sheffield) – continue to pursue re-development/ re-location plans	1	High	National Videogame Museum	●	○
	Brodsworth Hall (Doncaster) – investigate development/refurbishment options and funding	1	Medium	English Heritage	●	○
	Cannon Hall Gallery (Barnsley)	1	Medium	BMBC	●	○
	Elsecar Heritage Centre (Barnsley) – continue development and visioning proposals	1	High	BMBC	●	○
	Graves Gallery (Sheffield) – investigate options for refurbishment and expansion	2	Medium	SCC	●	○
	Wentworth Woodhouse (Rotherham) – secure funding for, and complete Stable development, and pursue options for wider investment	2	High	Wentworth Woodhouse Trust	●	●

Actions

Project	Description	Project Category	Priority	Lead body	Phase	
					Foundation	Development
Action Area 1: Develop our Product and Places...cont						
Capital Developments	Hayfield Lane Rural Leisure Centre (Doncaster) - artificial lake with watersports and lodge accommodation	1	Medium	CDC	●	
	Rother Valley Country Park (Rotherham) – new visitor facilities	2	Medium	RMBC	●	
	Parkwood Springs outdoor leisure (Sheffield) - major investment in off road cycling trails and supporting infrastructure	2	Medium	SCC	●	
Town/city centres	Ongoing regeneration, animation and promotion of principal town and city centres	1	High	BMBC/CDC/ RMBC/SCC	●	●
Accommodation study	Study into scale, performance and investment opportunities for the region's accommodation sector	3	Medium	LVEP		●
Action Area 2: Increase Awareness our Destinations						
Place marketing	Continued place-marketing campaigns for our respective areas	1	High	BMBC/CDC/ RMBC/SCC	●	●
Cross marketing	Programme of cross-marketing of our destinations using each other's marketing collateral	2	Medium	BMBC/CDC/ RMBC/SCC	●	●
Action Area 3: Develop Specific Reasons to Visit						
Events	Development of area wide targets and resources, and bidding mechanisms	3	High	LVEP	●	●
	Assess potential of signature events	1/3	Medium	LVEP		●
	Continued development and delivery of local event programmes	1	Medium / High	BMBC/CDC/ RMBC/SCC	●	●

Actions

Project	Description	Project Category	Priority	Lead body	Phase	
					Foundation	Development
Cluster Development (family)	Develop a cluster of family-based attractions and associated consumer campaign	3	High	LVEP	●	●
	Explore options for the development of bookable packages (hotels and accommodation)	3	Medium	LVEP		●
	Consider other joint working e.g. equipment bank, joint recruitment etc.	3	Medium	LVEP	●	
Cluster Development (heritage)	Development of a cluster of heritage and cultural attractions and a group-based campaign	3	High	LVEP		●
	Explore other activities including bookable product/itineraries	3	Medium	LVEP		●
Conference marketing	Ongoing conference ambassador, sales and marketing programmes	1	Medium / High	CDC/SCC	●	●
	Consider expansion of existing Ambassador programme to SY Level	2	Medium	SCC		○
Action Area 4: Enhance our Transport Provision and Connectivity						
Public transport	Embed the needs of visitors within wider public transport planning and provision, using LTP as mechanism	3	High	SYMCA	●	●
South Yorkshire Airport City	Explore visitor opportunities	2	Medium	CDC/LVEP		●
Group travel	Assess and improve group travel provision for each area	2	Medium	BMBC/CDC/RMBC/SCC		●
Orientation	Review signage and wayfinding for each area	1	Medium	BMBC/CDC/RMBC/SCC	●	●
Active Travel	Investigate potential of Trans Pennine Trail and other active travel routes/methods	1	Medium	BMBC/TPT/SCC/CDC		●

Actions

Project	Description	Project Category	Priority	Lead body	Phase	
					Foundation	Development
Action Area 5: Manage our Visitor Economy Effectively						
Private sector engagement	Develop private sector engagement at most appropriate geography, and develop South Yorkshire co-ordination and relationships	2	High	BMBC/CDC/RMBC/SCC	●	●
Business Support and Recruitment/Skills	Research and identify business needs and explore options for intervention where required	3	High	SYMCA/LVEP	●	○
Sustainability, accessibility and inclusivity	Showcase and rollout of national schemes and good practice through existing networks	2	High	LVEP/BMBC/CDC/RMBC/SCC	●	○
Intelligence	Establish regional group to develop consistent approaches to data and invest in accommodation related data and perceptions/target market research, aligned with national initiatives	3	High	SYMCA/LVEP	●	●
LVEP	Development and evolution of delivery structures	3	High	LVEP	●	





Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Consultees

Organisation	Consultee
Steering Group	
Barnsley MBC	Jon Finch
Doncaster MBC	Chris Dungworth/Lorna Reeve
Rotherham City Council	Neil Best
Sheffield City Council	Emma France/Wendy Ulyett
South Yorkshire MCA	Andrew Gates
One to one Conversations	
Barnsley and Doncaster Chamber of Commerce	Carrie Sudbury
Globe Holidays	Paul Bicknell
Rotherham MBC	Cllr David Sheppard
Wentworth Woodhouse	Dame Julie Kenny/ Sarah McLeod
Gullivers	Julie Dalton
Magna	Kevin Tomlinson (with Jackie Freeborn – Rotherham Pioneers)
AESSEAL plc/Sheffield Property Association	Martin McKervey
Barnsley Premier Leisure (Metrodome)	Richard Bailey
Visit England	Paul Szomoru
Yorkshire Wildlife Park	Cheryl Williams
Sheffield Museums	Chris Harvey
National Videogame Museum	John O'Shea/Cat Powell
SYMCA Data+	Abdul -Quadeer Khan/Lewis Cardwell
Face to Face Workshops	
Barnsley Visitor Economy Forum	13th November-attendees list retained by council team (c. 20)
Doncaster Visitor Economy Group	14th November-attendees list below
Lakeside Village	Abby Chandler

cont...

Organisation	Consultee
Cast	Emily Graham
Enigma Rooms / Axe throwing	Nick Granger
English Heritage	Ralph Hewitt
Doncaster Racecourse	Rachel Harwood
Doncaster Culture Trust	Cathy Hinde
Goffs	Alex Robinson
Visit Doncaster	Chris Dungworth, Lorna Reeve, Andy McAteer, Madi Plumb, Katy Lewin (VIC)
Savoy Cinema	Lucy Cammack
South Yorkshire Aircraft Museum	Malcolm Taylor
Right Up Our Street	Sally Lockey / Lizzie Hewitt
Darts	Eliza Evans
Holiday Inn	Emily White
Holiday Inn Express	Ginnette Botting
Caged Steel	Alex McReynolds
Doncaster Council (Events)	Jenny Dewsnap

Appendix 2: List of existing and planned major capital projects

Project Name	Status	Timescales	Budget
Wentworth Woodhouse Visitor Facilities	EOI to be submitted early 2024	2024-26	£10 m
Wentworth Woodhouse Stables	Within overall masterplan	'Start on site in 5 years'	£60 m
Elsecar	Funded	2023-25	£3 m
Elsecar Vision	Funding being explored	TBC	£25 m
Worsbrough Mill & SSSI	On site	2023-24	
Cannon Hall Gallery	Being explored		
Thrybergh CP	Funded	2024-25	£2.5 m
Glassworks	Complete?		
Rother Valley CP	Funded	2024-25	£5.5 m

cont...

Project Name	Status	Timescales	Budget
Forge Island	On site	Completes 2024	
Heart of the City	On site	Completes late 2024	£470m
Fargate etc. FHSF	On site	Completes late 2024	£16m
Magna LUF improvements	On site	Completes March 2024	£2m
Castlegate/Harmony Works	On site		£20m
Kelham Island Stephenson Blake archive	TBC	2024	TBC
Sheffield Conference Centre	TBC		
Sheffield Event facilities	TBC		
National Videogame Museum	In discussion		
Meadowhall Leisure Hall	TBC		£150m
Graves Gallery	TBC		
Abbydale Industrial Hamlet	Funded	2025	£250,000
Parkwood Springs outdoor leisure	Funding awarded	TBC	£19m
Metrodome improvements	ALL TBC		
Doncaster Dome improvements	Under consideration	TBC	TBC
South Yorkshire Airport City	In negotiation	2024-26	TBC
Brodsworth Hall commercial and visitor facilities	Funding required	TBC	TBC
Yorkshire Wildlife Park Conference and Event Space and International Conservation Exchange	Project started awaiting economic uplift	2024-26	
Darts Decarbonisations	Pre funding	TBC	TBC
St James Baths spa and leisure	On Site	23/24	
Hayfield Lane Rural Leisure Centre man-made lake, surrounded by holiday lodges, caravan pitches, watersports	Planning approved	23/24	

Appendix 3: Policy and Strategy Review

Introduction

Rather than detailing the key projects and programmes of the four South Yorkshire Local Authorities (LA) and the Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), this review concentrates on:

- **The presence of the visitor economy in South Yorkshire level & LA strategies**
- **The profile of joint working in individual LA documents**
- **Any identified shared priorities.**

Only Sheffield and Doncaster have existing specific visitor economy strategies, which to some extent hampers the opportunity to identify shared priorities, although these can be found in related documents such as cultural strategies.

South Yorkshire Level Policies

Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan

2021-2041 (2021) - The Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan 2021-2041 (2021), co-owned by the city region LEP and the SYMCA is largely focussed on sectors and matters other than the visitor economy (albeit that some are related) including innovation, net zero, transport, digital skills, land & housing etc. There is strong reference to the creative and cultural sectors and the need to grow the creative industries in particular.³ Cultural participation is the closest indicator to the visitor economy.

Nevertheless, one of 6 key priorities for the economic plan is that *'We will have vibrant town and city centres with rich sporting, cultural and leisure offers attracting people and visitors from across the country.'*⁴ The strategy also notes that *'we host several national and international events each year that sit alongside industry leading cultural productions and activities. SCR also has a thriving cultural scene, as the*

birthplace for many music bands, the location for world renowned performing arts and a sports scene across football, both codes of rugby, swimming, boxing, athletics, cricket, cycling and outdoor sports.'

Unlocking The Potential Of Culture, Arts And Heritage

In South Yorkshire (2020) - A report commissioned by the four South Yorkshire Local Authorities and the MCA entitled **Unlocking The Potential Of Culture, Arts And Heritage In South Yorkshire (2020)** identifies that, nationally, culture is linked to 42% of tourism expenditure but that South Yorkshire is behind other city regions for both visitor numbers and spending and spending (see page 8). It is noted that public funding for the culture, arts & heritage (CAH) sector in South Yorkshire is significantly lower than both national averages and in equivalent city regions. The National Lottery Heritage Fund is providing £18 p.c. (Northern average £30 p.c.) and Arts Council England is providing £15 p.c (Northern average £27 p.c.). This is also the case for Local Authority funding where net expenditure per head is £28 compares to £34 (England), £42 (West Yorkshire) and £32 (Greater Manchester).

The report states that: 'If the strong attractions of the area were combined with a strong narrative and good marketing this could help grow the visitor economy as well as the CAH sector.'⁵ There are, however, no specific proposed 'interventions' relating to tourism, focussing instead on other economic and social outcomes.

Other/Related Local Authority Strategies

Both South Yorkshire and the Visitor Economy receive mixed profile within the various economic and related strategies at local level. To some extent this is an outcome of timescales, as later documents do make more of the opportunities of joint working, whereas those that are a few years older do not.

Barnsley

- **Barnsley's Town Centre Plan (2021-26)** aims to create the town as a 'place of possibilities'. Aspirations include diversifying the economy, better access, parking and

³ Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan 2021-2041 Section 2.2 pp24-25

⁴ Ibid Page 4

⁵ Unlocking The Potential Of Culture, Arts And Heritage In South Yorkshire p55

wayfinding, attractive and exciting (with a vibrant evening economy and connecting the Metrodome and Barnsley FC more) and well promoted. The Economic Renewal Action Plan (2021) identifies Culture and the Visitor Economy as one of five key priorities (the others are Town Centre, Principal Towns, Digital, and Transport) and mentions both capital projects (Worsbrough Mill) and revenue business support measures. The Town Centre URBED proposes a number of existing and potential projects that will impact on the visitor economy. This profile is not, however, carried through into the **Barnsley 2030** web pages or the **Council Plan 2021-24**. None of the key Barnsley documents reference joint working at a South Yorkshire level.

Doncaster

- In contrast, the **Doncaster Economic Strategy 2030 (2023)** contains numerous references to SYMCA, the City Region LEP and the importance of partnership working. The document is broken down into a number of missions, priorities, aims and key projects. A number of these refer to 'Strengthen(ing) and promote(ing) the cultural sector and visitor economy across Doncaster'.⁶ Specifically, the mission project 'Visit Doncaster' contains actions around maximising the impact of major events, attracting more visitors to the borough and to 'Work closely with regional, national and international partners to promote Doncaster's visitor economy more widely'.⁷
- Doncaster's own **Visitor Economy Strategy 2019 – 2022**, contains an objective to develop 'Longer Stays' which could be achieved through SY level working and a specific intention to 'Support the promotional initiatives of a wider South Yorkshire marketing campaign'.⁸
- The **Doncaster Culture Strategy 2030** cites tourism

and visitor economy as an 'over-arching priority'⁹, listing visitor numbers as an economic output of cultural activity and events, with a later to commitment to 'better capture, analyse and understand data around visitor numbers, participation and impact (direct and indirect) on our visitor economy, and to ensure this data is used when making plans and decisions'¹⁰. The importance of events and sport in attracting visitors is noted and the Visitor Economy Group is cited as a delivery partner. The strategy is generally positive about SY and SYMCA as a source of funding but there are no specific mentions of SY working except the development of a SY cultural strategy.

- **The Education & Skills 2030 Strategy – Developing Talent and Innovation in Doncaster**, notes the opportunity for the cultural sector to become 'world class'¹¹ but is less positive about hospitality, which it describes as a 'volatile shrinking sector'.¹²

Rotherham

- Rotherham's **Economic Growth Plan 2015-2025** cites the Visitor Economy as one of three priorities (along with Town Centre and Transport) and includes a major programme capital works for the town centre, which will add to its vitality and appeal for visitors, building on (then) recent investment. The plan also identifies the project which became Gulliver's Valley.
- The later **Rotherham Cultural Strategy 2019-2026 – 'Things to do, places to go'** – contains numerous references to the Visitor Economy and the relationship between culture and tourism is strongly articulated, with a 'Visitor Economy Group' identified as a delivery partners for the Cultural Partnership Board. Wentworth Woodhouse, Rother Valley, and the 'beautiful landscape and historic environment'¹³ are seen as key opportunities.

6 Doncaster Economic Strategy p26

7 Ibid p27

8 Doncaster VE Strategy p29

9 Doncaster Culture Strategy p9 (and following quote)

10 Ibid. p30

11 See p30

12 P28

13 Rotherham Cultural Strategy p7

- In contrast, the **Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy 2019-2025 ‘Extending Prosperity to All’** does not mention the Visitor Economy and there are no references to South Yorkshire working in any of the key documents reviewed, apart from the **Rotherham Council Plan 2022-25** which notes the opportunities for working with SYMCA, particularly around public transport.

Sheffield

- The **Sheffield City Centre Strategic Vision (2022)** has five ambitions. Ambition 5 notes that:¹⁴ ‘Sheffield’s visitor economy is an important income generator for the City and will continue to grow’ Current strengths are the events programme, the ‘largest theatre complex outside London’ (Crucible & Lyceum theatres) and the Millennium Gallery. Challenges include the ‘lack of an early evening leisure offer.’¹⁵ Specifically the Vision commits to a transformational project for the Graves Art Gallery, working with regional and national partners. Much is made of the existing and potential cultural events programme.
- The **council’s Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-23 ‘Our Sheffield’** makes no specific reference to tourists or the visitor economy but does set out a number of key actions that will impact positively.
- The **Outdoor City Economic Strategy (2016)** sets out to exploit and improve Sheffield’s unique geography and outdoor recreation opportunities. Tourism is at the heart of the document, with the outdoors a key driver for ‘attracting talent, trade and tourism’.¹⁶ The strategy notes the (then) ongoing increase in outdoor activity (which has been accelerated by Covid) and the importance of outdoor recreation to the UK staying visitor market, with 37% of all overnight trips involving outdoor activity.¹⁷

¹⁴ Sheffield City Centre Strategic Vision Page 565

¹⁵ Ibid Page 547

¹⁶ Outdoor City Economic Strategy Page 4

¹⁷ Source: Reconomics, Sport & Recreation Alliance 2014

¹⁸ Sheffield DMP p2

¹⁹ Ibid p5

²⁰ Ibid p12

- The strategies for the **Culture Collective (2021)** and **Culture Consortium (2017)** both refer to tourism and the links between the two sectors.
- Although there are no references to working with South Yorkshire in any of the previous Sheffield strategies, the **Sheffield Destination Management Plan (2023)** emphasises the importance of business tourism and events and cites supporting the ‘wider South Yorkshire DMP’¹⁸ within one of its two principal aims. There are numerous references to the other Local Authorities and the South Yorkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP). Specific actions include: ‘explore opportunities for joint marketing narratives, content and / or campaigns with our neighbouring South Yorkshire destinations.’¹⁹ and ‘Continuing to develop our strategic partnerships with e.g. the South Yorkshire LVEP’²⁰

Conclusion

Although there is a mixed profile for the visitor economy and South Yorkshire level partnerships in the various reviewed documents, there are a number of common elements that are either explicitly mentioned or inferred across the full range of strategies:

- **A recognition of the link between culture and tourism and a desire to develop these further;**
- **An emphasis on events: sporting, cultural and business/academic related;**
- **Support for bringing together complementary products and offers to offer wider experiences to visitors, increasing both volumes and value (through e.g. extending the length of stay);**
- **A recent and proposed programme of investment in capital projects, town/city centre improvements and cultural facilities.**

Appendix 4: Report of Final Consultation

1. Methodology

Consultation has taken place throughout the development of the DMP, details of those individuals and organisations who were either spoken to on an individual basis or attended a workshop can be found at Appendix 1. Following final drafting and a meeting with the Steering Group in late December, a consultation draft with an accompanying online survey was widely distributed on 5th January with a 2 week deadline to more than 120 stakeholders. Eighteen responses were received to the survey and a further 5 individuals provided additional written comments (albeit that at least 3 had completed the survey). Parts of those responses were not relevant to the DMP so have not been included, others have been incorporated into the analysis.

As the default for the survey was anonymous (with an option to provide details), it would not be appropriate to list those who did respond. Nevertheless, it did contain a broad representation, both geographically and sectorally, including some key players in the attractions and private sector.

2. Question 1

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the DMP's aims. There was no disagreement with the second two aims marginally more popular.

Aim	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree
To generate more (and longer) visits and spend in the local economy.	9	6	1
To use the visitor economy to continue to develop and enhance the appeal and image of places in South Yorkshire to a range of audiences.	10	5	1
To engage with our residents through development of our visitor economy and hospitality sector to enhance their pride and quality of life.	10	5	1

3. Question 2

Respondents were also asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the DMP's five action areas. There was more variation to the response with action 3 'develop specific reasons to visit' and action 2 'increase awareness of our destinations', receiving more support than the others.

Action Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree
1. Develop our product and places	6	9	1
2. Increase awareness of our destinations	9	6	1
3. Develop specific reasons to visit	10	5	1
4. Enhance our transport provision and connectivity	7	5	3
5. Manage our visitor economy effectively	7	5	3

4. Questions 3 & 4 – Comments and Additions

In these questions, respondents were asked to comment on the aims and action areas (Q3) and suggest additional items for inclusion (Q4). Verbatim contributions are provided at the end of this Appendix.

4.1 Comments

Overall comments were positive towards the strategy contents. Suggestions were made regarding the need to prioritise action areas and also widen the delivery partnership to include ‘ parks, countryside, sport, physical activity, transport, business, art, heritage’. One respondent noted the need for a ‘what success looks like’ section supported by a ‘time plan and critical path analysis’. One respondent queried the inclusion of marketing actions and their relevance to LVEP status, where marketing is not considered the primary role.

Suggested response

Prioritisation, widening the delivery partnership and forward planning will form the next stage of work, the DMP already gives each project a priority rating and an indicative timescales which can be refined.

Marketing – whilst not the main priority, there is no prohibition on LVEPs’ undertaking this activity. The DMP is clear that it will focus on product or experience based marketing where the wider geography adds real value to individual destination efforts e.g. Families and Heritage seekers.

4.2 Additions

Suggestions to consider for inclusion (with proposed responses) were:

Suggestion	Response
1. Collaborative Mobility – an example in Genoa was given of an app based approach which allowed both residents and visitors to book multi modal transport journeys.	Refer to the local transport plan
2. ‘Meanwhile Uses Programme’ - to minimise impact of ‘areas of less appeal’	A positive proposal but one for local, rather than SY, delivery
3. Review potential of a Place Pass for visitors	To be considered within identified ‘cluster’ development projects
4. Could the reopened airport (like Dublin, Shannon and possibly Edinburgh) benefit from targeting investment in US pre clearance status and associated partnership with low cost airline such as Southwest Airlines?	Refer to Doncaster for consideration
5. Review potential for SY VEP information presence at motorway service stations and inter-city railway stations at or just before entry into SY?	Will be subject to available budget but proposed marketing activities are more targeted
6. Is there potential for growth in health spas?	Spas are a growth product nationally and internationally but there is no specific strength in SY, despite historical examples
7. We’d like to see an action area that focuses on developing Pride and Quality of Life for the community of Doncaster.	Local activity not suitable for SY level, refer to Doncaster

cont...

Suggestion	Response
8. The list of examples seems to miss key cultural sector venues, especially those with access to a national membership base e.g. National Trust/English Heritage/RSPB	Review relevant sections for inclusion
9. Please engage with business organisations and the private sector.	Chambers of Commerce and Sheffield Property Association were included in consultation and wider inclusion will be a matter for the next (delivery) stage
10. No, I think these areas are more than enough to get started on. Always room for restructure and rethink at a later date through continual evaluation.	Noted
11. Specific reference to the fact that Barnsley doesn't have sufficient hotel beds to attract larger events or accommodate a large volume of visiting tourism customers into the town	SY situation is already noted, not appropriate to identify specific locations in DMP.
12. Reference to the fact some of our 'leisure destination facilities' are in need of refurbishment and modernisation.	Review content and add where appropriate
13. The report suggest that South Yorkshire would benefit from trying to attract larger events, but could we give reference to the fact that our smaller events are vital and ultimately have and will continue to contribute to the overall visitor economy.	Review content and add where appropriate – smaller events will be more of a local matter but make an overall contribution
14. Food.	A critical part of the visitor experience and some good quality provision but not a distinctive strength for SY
15. Yorkshire Wildlife Park - include the ICE project (international conservation exchange)	Include where appropriate
16. The TPT seems missing in its entirety as an outdoor offer and transport connection creating a stop off point (or numerous) could also support increased activity, over night stays -	An important point - review and insert where appropriate
17. Darts (the UK's largest participatory arts organisation) / The Point isn't mentioned, we do offer a City centre gallery, cafe and event/conference space in an unusual and creative public venue which forms part of Doncaster's Cultural Quarter.	Refer to Doncaster regarding inclusion
18. Can we mention Wortley Hall in a few places	Review content and add where appropriate
19. Mention Wentworth Woodhouse regarding recent investment	Include
20. Document is too Sheffield-centric	Only one respondent raised this, balance is probably right

5. Question 5

The questionnaire invited respondees to rate the importance of broad action areas for South Yorkshire on a five point scale (where 1 = not very important and 5 = absolutely essential). NB two respondent left every question blank in this section so the totals add up to 16.

Areas given clear priority (awarded 5 by the highest numbers) were:

- **The regeneration of town and city centres - 9**
- **Place based marketing by individual partners – 8**

- **Groups based campaign for heritage and culture attractions – 8**

- **Capital projects, cross marketing, events, public transport and business support - 7**

However, the highest overall totals were achieved by:

- **Major Capital projects – 64**
- **Town and city centre regeneration, cross marketing, bookable weekend packages, family attraction consumer campaign and group based campaign for culture and heritage attractions - 61**

Action Area	1	2	3	4	5	Total Score
Deliver capital projects to venues and attractions like Wentworth Woodhouse, the Metrodome, the National Videogame Museum, Pond's Forge etc.	-	1	3	3	7	64
Ongoing regeneration and animation of town and city centres	-	1	2	2	9	61
Investigate opportunities to diversify and develop accommodation in South Yorkshire	1	-	2	5	6	60
Continued place marketing campaigns for our respective areas to promote them	-	-	-	6	8	58
A programme of cross marketing of our destinations using each other's marketing collateral	-	-	2	5	7	61
Ongoing PR and influencers campaign focusing on showcasing the South Yorkshire offer and securing coverage	-	-	1	8	5	60
Development of, and bidding for, South Yorkshire wide events	-	1	3	3	7	58
Development of a consumer campaign based on our family based attractions	-	-	-	9	5	61
Development of bookable weekend packages of hotels and attractions	-	-	1	7	6	61
Development of a group/travel trade campaign based around heritage and cultural attractions	-	-	3	3	8	61
Ongoing conference sales and marketing programmes	-	2	3	3	6	55
Embed the needs of visitors within wider public transport planning and provision	-	-	5	2	7	58
Improve group travel provision for each area	-	-	2	7	5	59
Improve signage and wayfinding for each area	-	-	3	6	5	58
Provide business support, training and recruitment schemes	-	2	1	4	7	58
Showcase sustainability and accessibility schemes	-	-	3	7	4	57
Develop better research and intelligence to guide decision making	-	-	2	6	6	60

6. Question 6

Question 6 was open, inviting any comments on the plan that respondents wished to offer. A number of respondents were complimentary about the DMP. An important comment noted the absence of any reference to retail driving the visitor economy, with particular reference to Meadowhall as a gateway facility. This has been addressed in the final version.

Other input suggested:

- **Specific overseas markets for investigation (Scandinavia and the US)**
- **The need to take an integrated planning approach**
- **For new investment to support existing programming**
- **The need to prioritise those projects that deliver the greatest return**
- **The important contribution of SME's to growth and the need to provide growth and start up opportunities**
- **That the DMP is too 'Sheffield Centric' and needs to be more balanced**
- **A need to maintain the momentum and see quick action arising from the DMP.**



7. Verbatim Responses

Question 3 – Comments on the Aims and Action Areas

'The draft strategy has much to commend it. Hopefully as appropriate it will be supported in other strategies such as Local Plans, Local Transport Plans etc. '

'It will need a wider systems approach to all the things that are mentioned and across all of the services locally i.e. parks, countryside, sport, physical activity, transport, business, art, heritage. Representatives from these need to be part of the building of this rather than it being an after thought to ensure that its embedded and adopted widely.'

'Hard to disagree with any of the above. As consultation continues clearly there is much to be done in each action area. Prioritising areas over the region could be a challenge. I would like to see, no doubt you are working on, a vision of 'what success looks like' in 2027 for the region, objectives agreed and linked to a time plan and critical path analysis. The position audit demonstrates where we are now and the work will look at where we want to be and how it can be achieved.'

'Consider food in the offer and for external users what's our USP'

'Yes I have a lot of visitors staying but my brand has not been mentioned in this draft'

'Our Mission – this section clearly stated that one of the three clear objectives is marketing, I think I am right in saying the Destination Management Plan is the key document for the LVEP and later in the document it states the same. This contradicts what XXXX said to us, that is, the marketing will not be part of the remit of the LVEP, the LVEP is only the support re jobs, training, B to B and the such.'

Additions

1. Collaborative Mobility - see Genoa example below. Seek to encourage SYMCA in the new Transport Plan to include a 'Collaborative Mobility Approach' see Genoa example GoGoGe ie Genoa – Hitachi example <https://news.railbusinessdaily.com/hitachi-rails-world-first-digital-transport-app-enters-full-commercial-service-to-connect-genoas-entire-public-transport-infrastructure/> Hitachi Rail's world-first 360Pass app, connecting Genoa's entire public transport infrastructure, is now available to all 600,000 citizens and the 3,500,000 annual visitors, following a new agreement with the city's transit authority, AMT. Having completed a successful year long trial, the 360Pass app, known as GoGoGe in Genoa, will transform multi-modal transport across the city. The service offers every person living or visiting Genoa the possibility to plan, book, and pay the cheapest fare for multimodal trips by integrating the city's public and private transport system. It is available from this month and is completely free to download. The service offers users the possibility to plan, book, and pay for multimodal trips by integrating the city's public and private transport system. In total, 663 buses, 2500 bus stops, the metro line used by 15 million p.a., two funiculars, one historic hillside railway, 10 public lifts and two suburban bus routes that span 50km, have been connected. App users also have the power – via the touch of a button on their mobile phones – to hire an electric car, pay for parking or find an e-moped.
2. Use of 'Meanwhile Uses Programme' - to minimise impact of 'areas of less appeal'
3. Review potential of a Place Pass for visitors one day, two day, three day etc versions as per York Pass
4. Note comments on Doncaster Airport and also the drafts reference to SY's extremely modest number of international visitors - could the reopened airport (like Dublin, Shannon and possibly Edinburgh) benefit from targeting investment in US pre clearance status and associated partnership with low cost airline such as Southwest Airlines? There are a number of security and prison facilities in proximity to support staffing and meeting US pre clearance concerns with dealing with terrorist threats.
5. Review potential for SY VEP information presence at motorway service stations and inter-city railway stations at or just before entry into SY?
6. Is there potential for growth in health spa and or emphasising healthy food emphasis - in times past 'spas' as at Askern etc were promoted with large hotels ie Askern Hydro.
7. We'd like to see an action area that focuses on developing Pride and Quality of Life for the community of Doncaster.

As mentioned in answer to 3 - promotion of a well funded SY Meanwhile (temporary) Uses programme might be a way of introducing new 'tasters' of new attractions at derelict/semi derelict/under used sites which are prominent and detract from image of place. In times past 'Garden Festivals' were used.
8. The list of examples seems to miss key cultural sector venues eg National Trust audience - think this is from NT
9. Please engage with business and the private sector. We have many business organisations in South Yorkshire- Make UK, Federation of Small Business, CBI, Sheffield Property Association, Sheffield Digital etc.
10. No, I think these areas are more than enough to get started on. Always room for restructure and rethink at a later date through continual evaluation.
11. 3.2 section Challenges Could we give specific reference to the fact that Barnsley doesn't have sufficient hotel beds to attract larger events or accommodate a large volume of visiting tourism customers into the town
12. Could we give reference to the fact some of our 'leisure destination' facilities e.g. the Metrodome are in desperate need of refurbishment and modernisation to move forward into the future.

13. *In addition, I know the report suggest that South Yorkshire would benefit from trying to attract larger events, but could we give reference to the fact that our smaller events are vital and ultimately have and will continue to contribute to the overall visitor economy.*
14. *Food.*
15. *With regard to YWP in the report, it does mention our conference/events centre in the pipeline but when I spoke with the consultants we didn't talk about the ICE project (international conservation exchange) which is also a major pipeline capex for us hopefully for 2025/6. That is a education/information centre with AR/VR capabilities for students (school and university research) and visitors with our conservation work.*
16. *The TPW seems missing in its entirety as an outdoor offer and transport connection creating a stop off point (or numerous) could also support increased activity, over night stays*
17. *Darts (the UK's largest participatory arts organisation) /The Point isn't mentioned, which I understand as we're a small fish in a large pond destination-wise, but we do offer a City centre gallery, cafe and event/conference space in an unusual and creative public venue which forms part of Doncaster's Cultural Quarter and we have plans (funding dependent) to decarbonise the building (so a capital project, although not one that extends the offer I'm afraid!).*

I also wondered whether any mention could be made about investment in the creative workforce - growing local talent and supporting retention so we have high quality artists and creatives adding to the cultural economy and delivering those events, attractions and festivals that bring visitors in. I know this isn't the focus of the document, by SYMCA has a role to play in investing in this, which would feed into the bigger Visitor Economy picture.

18. *Can we mention Wortley Hall on Page 8 along*
- *Page 9 is it possible to get us in the heritage of the pie graph again as grade II listed and we are very closely relate two the other two.*
 - *Page 11 3.1 same again as keen to show the family links.*
19. *On page 9 you talk about significant investments having already been made but you completely miss out WW - which has attracted £29m in the last 6 years alone, all secured ourselves but you mention other sites which have had very little by comparison. WW is extremely successful at using funding to attract other investment.*

Question 6

'The plan is very much welcomed. Perhaps preliminary work should be undertaken to identify potential international markets. US, Denmark and Iceland might be helpful as these have strong airline interests which might be supportive of Doncaster airport aspirations. As mentioned in answer to 3 the US is a potential market and seeking Government support for including SY /Yorkshire in trade agreement discussions ie US State discussions - Denmark/Copenhagen/Iceland (SY was part of the pre-Norman conquest Danelaw).'

'The role of retail in driving the visitor economy seems to be largely ignored. Meadowhall has invested in developing their retail, family & leisure appeal although their big leisure project has been postponed to 2029. Meadowhall is a great gateway venue to South Yorkshire and should have a place/mention in the plan.'

'There are many campaigns that relate to different parts of the system, i.e. sport, physical activity, business, art etc. Anything that we do as a promotor needs to co-exist and support those campaigns to avoid duplication or dilution of the right messages. There is also a lot in planning around capital projects ie. metrodome or ponds forge, so there needs to be a recognition of existing and planned work feeding, rather than reinventing the wheel. The final thing would be to consider where the biggest gains are for an area and for SY for the short, medium and long term to focus energy on those

rather than everything.'

'All of the above recognise that any growth economy is driven by SME's and opportunities. The plan needs to ensure there are start up and growth opportunities.'

'SYDMP – Solid bit of work'

'I think that the document is well researched and interesting, giving good facts and information. At a later stage the executive summary and mission sections should give more clarity and detail about 'what success looks like' end game analysis quantified and valued.

Once the end game is clear the action plan will follow. It is hard to disagree with any of the work streams, all appear valid. The process moves from what is to be achieved to how and when

However the work streams need to be prioritised as they are not of equal value and some will take longer than others. There will probably be an issue of resource and capability to deliver the work streams and gap analysis.

No doubt there will be a critical path analysis to manage work stream delivery in accordance with the phased approach and end game time scales.

Growth economies are fuelled by SME's. Business support is mentioned in the work streams but part of the process should be to create a climate of opportunity for start up and growth. The Chamber(s) will have a view.'

'I agree completely with your action areas and aims and priorities - but the report lacks 3 really important points

a. that the LVEP has got to deliver more than just Sheffield - I know this is in but I think it needs to be bolder,

b. The report gives a nod to everyone - I think it needs to be much stronger around what is going to be needed to create a really strong S Yorks brand and that has to focus on 1 or 2 sites -that might not please everyone but it needs to be brought out much more strongly and there needs to be an action plan that is deliverable - not just words - we have seen so many reports like this and they all say the same thing –

c. That tourism/culture needs product and place investment, branding and marketing and better joined up approach. '





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