Visitor Economy Plan
2015 – 2019
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Value of the Visitor Economy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Visitor Perceptions and Behaviours</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Strategic Fit</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Current Offer and Opportunities for Growth</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Growing the Value of the Visitor Economy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Priorities and Actions</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Measures of Success</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

A strong visitor economy is important to the economic health of the Derbyshire Dales. Generating an estimated £315m in visitor spend it provides employment, offers business opportunities and helps sustain local services – but there is room for growth. To grow the value of the sector visitors need to be encouraged to spend more when they come. Promoting the special qualities of the Dales, improving the visitor ‘welcome’, providing better experiences and working towards a higher value visitor offer will help achieve this.

This plan takes its lead from the District Council’s Economic Plan. Drawing on the area’s distinctive rural offer, proximity to urban markets and already high visitor numbers (relative to other Derbyshire districts), the aim of the plan is:

**AIM:**

To develop a higher value visitor economy in the Derbyshire Dales

Doing everything needed to achieve this aim is a ‘big ask’ of the District Council and is not the purpose of this plan. Rather, within the context of available resources, effort will be focused on three priorities where District Council intervention can make a difference, complementing and adding to the activities of our partners and other stakeholders:

**PRIORITIES:**

1. Support businesses within the visitor economy to exploit key markets and supply chain opportunities
2. Promote the Derbyshire Dales and Peak District as an inspiring place to live, work and visit
3. Improve the quality of the visitor experience offered in the Derbyshire Dales

The actions that follow aim to help visitor economy businesses realise their growth potential, create new jobs and support an uplift in value within the sector, capitalising on the advantages of the Dales location.

Drawing on available evidence, the plan supports Visit England objectives for growing rural tourism, the Visitor Economy Growth Plan prepared by the Visit Peak District & Derbyshire DMO and earlier work on a (draft) Destination Management Plan for the Peak District. The plan also aligns with the Local Enterprise Partnerships’ strategic economic plans for growth and funding priorities which offer opportunities to grow the rural visitor economy. Continued close working with Peak District partners will be important here in order to secure limited external funds.

2. Value of the Visitor Economy

The visitor economy includes those businesses which derive a significant proportion of their day to day business from visitors i.e. accommodation providers, food services, attractions, museums, sporting and leisure facilities, travel agencies and tour operators. Many retail and creative industry businesses also rely on the visitor pound.

The visitor economy can help sustain important services for rural communities such as village shops, post offices and pubs. It also provides opportunities for rural businesses to supplement their income e.g. through farm diversification and entry level employment opportunities, often for younger people.
National picture
Estimates suggest the visitor economy is worth £106bn in England with the sector supporting some 2.6m jobs. Its value is projected to increase to £216bn by 2025.

Regarding visitors to the countryside, Visit England research indicates 70% of staying visits are made by two groups: families and ‘empty nesters’ (adults whose children have left home). Over 40% of visitors in employment work in higher paid professional / managerial occupations (the most represented socio-economic group).

Shorter breaks continue to make up the majority of domestic trips. Some 60% of trips to the countryside are short breaks (1-3 nights). Visit England estimate the average British adult took two domestic tourism trips of one night or more in 2013, stayed away from home for approximately three nights per trip and spent in the order of £190. Trips to the countryside have also increased since 2006 (2.7%) compared to a slight fall in trips to the seaside.

Peak District & Derbyshire
Derbyshire (including Derby City) receives an estimated 39m visits p.a. worth over £1.7bn. The majority of visits are during the six months between May and September and repeat visits are high. Most are day visits (approx. 90%). Of those staying, estimates suggest around 170,000 are overseas visitors contributing in the order of £64m to the local economy, significantly more per head than any other visitor.

Approx. 12,500 people are employed within the Peak District visitor economy (Derbyshire Dales, High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands) comprising 14% of total employment. Although the visitor economy has recently seen employment growth, the sector is generally characterised by part-time working and low wages, contributing to the low wage economy in the Dales - at £340 p.w. average workplace earnings are nearly 20% below the national average of £412 p.w.

Derbyshire Dales
The Dales receive around 5m visits a year worth an estimated £315m p.a. Part of the Peak District destination, Dales villages, market towns, cultural attractions and stunning landscapes draw large numbers from the surrounding cities. Again, most are day visits (although a higher proportion - 15% - stay in the Dales) and many arrive by car, highlighting an opportunity to encourage alternative forms of travel. Visitors come for the scenery, to sightsee or pursue outdoor activities. Overall, the visitor economy (including the 7% directly employed in tourism businesses) accounts for 16% of total employment, providing work for an estimated 5,000 people.

Derbyshire Dales has the largest volume of visitor accommodation in Derbyshire with over 1,230 accommodation establishments, approximately half the number in Derbyshire. Serviced accommodation makes up 30% and non-serviced the remainder.

Recent estimates of the economic impact of tourism suggest that despite a slight fall in visitor numbers since 2011 and lingering uncertainty within the economy, visitor expenditure has steadily grown. It also shows that despite the high proportion of day visitors, staying visitors contribute most to the Dales economy, both in terms of spend per head and overall spending:

---
1 Deloitte 2013
2 Great Britain Tourism Survey 2013
3 STEAM 2011
4 International Passenger Survey 2012
5 ASHE 2012
6 STEAM 2013
7 BRES 2013
### STEAM 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Staying Visitors</th>
<th>Day Visitors</th>
<th>All Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. Visitor Days</td>
<td>2.76m</td>
<td>2.74m</td>
<td>2.81m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor No’s</td>
<td>0.71m</td>
<td>0.70m</td>
<td>0.71m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Impact</td>
<td>£173m</td>
<td>£163m</td>
<td>£160m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Visitor Perceptions and Behaviours**

Although visitor satisfaction is above the English average and the Peak District remains on the list of top performing English destinations (14th out of 14), surveys suggest the area is being out-performed by other rural areas / National Parks. The destination has also lost ground to other destinations since the previous survey. Drilling down into available data (2011-12), the destination performs above average in areas such as:

- access to unspoilt countryside
- a clean and tidy environment
- a place where visitors feel safe and secure
- interesting towns and villages to visit
- welcoming and friendly people

...the first three being the high level strengths identified as essential to maintaining overall satisfaction levels. However, other aspects of the Peak District visitor experience are considered average or below average:

- high levels of customer service
- good range of outdoor activities
- easy to get around by public transport
- clear signposting that helps you find your way around the destination
- opportunities to eat and drink local food and produce
- availability of festivals, music, sporting and cultural events

In terms of changes in visitor behaviour, the internet is often the starting point for visitors when researching their trip and planning things to do during their stay. Review sites and social media have changed the way visitors make decisions. Visitors want access to information ‘on the go’ and visitor economy businesses need to keep pace.

70% of trips where a firm booking is made are now completed on-line and the volume of trips booked this way has more than doubled since 2006. Nearly a quarter of domestic trips (24%) booked in advance are booked the week before. Visitors are looking for last minute deals, particularly for short breaks when the weather is good.

Driven in part by the ability to instantly compare destinations online, visitor expectations continue to increase. According to Visit England, visitors prioritise ‘authentic experiences, quality and value for money’. Businesses in the Derbyshire Dales therefore need to continuously improve their offer to attract new and repeat business.

---

3 VE Brand & Satisfaction Tracker 2013-14
4. Strategic Fit

The central aim of the District Council’s Economic Plan 2014-2019 is to help develop a higher value economy in the Derbyshire Dales. The approach is to encourage growth in existing higher value sectors and raise productivity in sectors of lower value, including the visitor economy. The plan identifies the visitor economy as a key sector, with opportunities to stimulate enterprise and supply chain development, and a need for better paid jobs generally within the rural economy. The Council’s Visitor Economy Plan has been developed within this context.

Visit England’s ten year tourism strategy³ targets 5% growth year on year in the value of tourism with its Rural Tourism Action Plan identifying three priorities to stimulate growth:

• diversifying and modernising rural tourism products to generate business opportunities suited to local environments and communities;
• increasing consumer awareness, understanding and enjoyment of rural products and experiences; and
• encouraging rural communities and economies to benefit from the value of rural tourism.

The concept of ‘wise growth’ continues to be promoted, encouraging a responsible and sustainable approach to growing tourism, an approach particularly relevant within the National Park.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) also recognise the sector’s growth potential. D2N2 has identified the visitor economy as a key sector for targeted investment to help meet its ten year targets for job creation and GVA. To guide its investment programme, Colliers International prepared a visitor economy review and capital investment study for the LEP, prioritising potential activity on the basis of deliverability and impact. As a result, D2N2 has published its own Visitor Economy Action Plan. Investment priorities of particular relevance to the Dales and Peak District include:

• attracting more hotel chains to the area
• supporting the development of more anchor attractions
• SME support programmes aimed at clusters of attractions and visitor economy businesses, guided by local destination development plans
• promoting and improving markets as assets to the visitor economy
• identifying and addressing broadband and mobile phone connectivity ‘black spots’.

The Sheffield City Region (SCR) LEP recognises the growth potential of sport, leisure and tourism, particularly in destinations like the Peak District. Opportunities for business start-ups and supply chain development within the sector are also well understood.

Both LEPs have allocated part of their European funds to encourage growth from rural tourism. The locally delivered LEADER approach also offers opportunities to develop the sector through its rural tourism, micro-enterprise and farm diversification strands.

The Visit Peak District & Derbyshire DMO has adopted Visit England’s target of 5% growth p.a. Its Growth Plan¹⁰ aims to help generate £1.36bn additional visitor spend and 8,500 new jobs within the sector (job creation target revised to 2.3% to reflect anticipated growth based on STEAM data) up to 2023. The plan will guide D2N2’s spending to help grow the visitor economy in the Peak District and Derbyshire. Priorities include:

• maximising the impact of the visitor economy in key destinations
• increasing capital investment to improve the visitor offer
• maximising the potential for growth through tactical marketing campaigns.

---

³ Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010-2020
¹⁰ Peak District and Derbyshire Growth Strategy for the Visitor Economy 2014-2020
Earlier work led by the DMO and Peak District National Park Authority to prepare a draft Peak District Destination Management Plan has also been taken into account. Shaped through engagement with a range of stakeholders, including the District Council, the plan identifies six themed objectives:

- marketing and establishing the Peak District brand
- developing the destination product
- improving the visitor experience
- improving visitor infrastructure
- improving quality of service and sector skills
- a need for better research and analysis.

Although yet to be formally adopted, the work undertaken to prepare the draft established a consensus amongst partners on the main challenges and opportunities for the destination and potential areas for action, several of which have informed activity proposed within this plan.

With more than half the district within the National Park, the Peak District National Park Management Plan is also relevant. The management plan recognises the opportunity to grow the value of tourism by encouraging more people to explore the National Park and to spend more money locally. The strategic focus is on increasing visitor numbers at times of the year when there is capacity, encouraging staying visitors to stay longer and finding other ways of increasing spending whilst at the same time encouraging visitors to leave a smaller environmental footprint. Key delivery aims include:

- promoting opportunities for tourism across the Peak District as one of England’s most significant tourism brands
- enhancing the quality of the visitor experience, including by developing connections to neighbouring urban areas, encouraging sustainable travel and managing development at popular visitor ‘hubs’
- championing the development of environmentally orientated products and services
- improving the quality of the tourism offer compatible with the special qualities of the National Park
- raising the brand profile and value of Peak District products and services.

Led by Business Peak District (working with other local partnerships including the DMO, Nature Peak District and Peak District Partnership) the Enterprise Peak District package identifies a number of initiatives seeking LEP support to stimulate economic growth. Priorities include: improving access to finance to help grow Peak District businesses, extending the reach of business support programmes, promoting the Inspired by the Peak District brand, supply chain and skills development activities and encouraging business development opportunities associated with the growth of cycling. This plan aims to further develop these initiatives from a visitor economy perspective.

As well as promoting their own destinations a look at tourism plans in neighbouring authorities confirms recognition of the value of the Peak District as an ‘attract’ brand and opportunities for visitor dispersal once people are here. The Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Strategy also highlights the key role of market towns as visitor hubs. The relationship with larger urban areas is also important with Derby City identifying its proximity to branded attractions such as the Peak District as an important strength. Mutual economic benefits have also been identified within key visitor markets such as cycle tourism, with opportunities to link investments in infrastructure within the Peak District to projects such as the city’s new £28m velodrome development.

Within this wider context, the following section analyses the Derbyshire Dales tourism product as it is now and potential opportunities to enhance the value of the visitor economy in the future.
### The Derbyshire Dales – current ‘offer’ and opportunities for growth

#### Strengths
- Peak District National Park – internationally recognised visitor destination
- Exceptional landscape quality and character market towns and villages, several acting as visitor hubs and destinations in their own right
- Central location
- Peak District identified as a Visit England ‘attract’ brand
- Significant heritage offer including Chatsworth, Haddon Hall and Derwent Valley Mills WHS
- Independent retailers and specialist shops in market towns e.g. Ashbourne and Matlock antique clusters, mixed with national brands
- Established programme of festivals and events e.g. Well dressings, farmers markets, Matlock Bath illuminations and Peak District Summer of Cycling inc. Eroica
- Good range of self-catering accommodation and camping and caravan sites
- Excellent, accessible walking and cycling routes, growing reputation for leisure cycling and continuing Government investment in the cycle network
- Range of other attractions including Carsington Water, Heights of Abraham and Gullivers Kingdom plus host of open gardens
- Access to visitor information within the market towns and other visitor hubs
- Enterprising rural communities and active voluntary and community sector

#### Weaknesses
- Visitor economy jobs often low skilled, part time and low paid
- Dominance of the day visitor market
- Lower visitor spending when compared to other National Parks / rural areas
- Public transport links within the area and high number of car based trips
- Access to fast broadband and inconsistent mobile phone coverage
- Lack of hotel and serviced accommodation
- Variable quality in levels of customer service, including within food services and retail and in the quality of the retail offer
- Variable quality of some attractions and lack of indoor attractions
- Inconsistent signage
- Shops closed on Sundays in some market towns
- Limited business tourism (14% of trips to Derbyshire) and evening economy
- Limited up to date intelligence on the local visitor market including visitor profiles and habits and on occupancy rates of local accommodation
- Limited budgets to support tourism development and promotion
- Limited visitor accommodation for people with disabilities
- Some traffic congestion in the summer months

#### Opportunities
- Proximity to urban markets and improving the local supply chain to the visitor economy to increase value from tourism spend
- Enhancing the quality of the Dales offer to attract higher spending visitors
- Further developing the short break market
- Local food & drink offer and demand for UK produced farm products
- Wider take-up of the ‘Inspired by the Peak District’ brand
- Growth opportunities in cycle tourism
- Increasing take up of quality and environmental accreditation schemes
- Increasing the direct business benefits of local festivals and events
- Improving the visitor ‘welcome’, signage and interpretation
- On-line marketing opportunities and better use of social media
- Planned investments in and around the Peak District e.g. Buxton Crescent & Peak Resort
- Better integration with the health & wellbeing agenda
- Local people and businesses e.g. in retail and catering acting as ‘ambassadors’ for the area
- LEP / EU funding opportunities, including LEADER, to support rural tourism development
- Established cross border partnership working arrangements

#### Threats
- Squeeze on disposable income limiting the spending power of visitors
- Austerity measures impacting on public spending and the future delivery of discretionary services
- Impact on the high street / independent retailers of on-line shopping
- Slow uplift in rural broadband speeds plus some remoter areas only able to access a basic service
- Keeping up with increasing visitor demands and expectations
- Other rural destinations raising their profile / ‘getting their act together’
- Businesses unable or unwilling to invest in high quality facilities and services
- Not keeping pace with technology / changing visitor behaviours
- Poor image of the sector as a career path
- Negative attitude towards tourism amongst some residents
- Weather (mainly an outdoor destination)
6. Growing the Value of the Visitor Economy

The key to growing the visitor economy is making it more productive. Currently the Dales and wider Peak District underperform compared with other rural / National Park destinations. For example, whilst GVA at £50k per employee (from the rural economy as a whole) is on a par with areas such as the Yorkshire Dales, at £122m p.a. compared to £129m p.a. visitor spending is lower in the Peak District National Park despite the area attracting both a higher number of trips and bed nights.

Alongside earlier evidence this highlights both a need and opportunity to look at where the destination could reduce this gap in spending by capitalising on the advantages offered by its location and, working with local partners, enhancing the experiences it has to offer. Considering its special qualities and proximity to urban centres it could be argued the Dales and wider Peak District destination is still ‘punching below its weight’ - this needs to change. To help generate greater value from the sector and to complement the work of partners, attention needs to focus in the following areas:

- **A more concerted effort to develop the short break market** – The Dales central location and distinctive rural offer provides further potential to grow the short break market. The area offers the opportunity to ‘get away from it all’ to enjoy superb landscapes and the great outdoors without travelling hours to get here (or get home).

  Emphasis needs to be placed on promoting the unique experiences visitors can expect whilst they are here and the range of things they can do to make the most of their time away. **Walking, cycling and local food & drink** all offer opportunities to exploit with marketing campaigns tailored towards different types of visitor, from the young professional to families and empty nesters. Opportunities to promote more sustainable travel options to and from the area will also be identified. Encouraging accommodation providers to offer promotions linked to Dales events to persuade visitors to ‘stay the extra day’ and actively seeking investment in a range of hotel accommodation within the area will also help develop this market.

- **Greater emphasis on quality** – providing a high quality visitor experience from start to finish is essential if the visitor economy is to realise its growth potential. Part of this is about improving the skills of those working within and entering the sector. It’s also about improving the quality of the local tourism ‘product’.

  As evidenced by recent surveys as well as strengthening the visitor welcome and service customers receive, businesses within the wider visitor economy need to be encouraged to develop new skills, particularly to improve their web presence, more effectively utilise social media and respond to visitor feedback online. With micro-businesses dominating the sector, support needs to be tailored to meet their needs by providing training in rural venues, in ‘bite sized’ chunks and at times to suit the business. Help to improve supervisory and management skills and greater promotion of higher level apprenticeships and graduate recruitment opportunities will also help drive up skill levels within the sector. Opportunities for partnership working with the DMO, e-business club, University of Derby and other partners will be explored to help improve access to training and support for businesses across the visitor economy. Activity will support and align with D2N2’s Skills Action Plan for the Visitor Economy.

  Other activity to improve the quality of the visitor experience needs to be focused on established Dales visitor hubs and initiatives to maximise opportunities in key markets (see over).

---

11 Great Britain Tourism Survey 2013 – domestic tourism only
12 D2N2 Visitor Economy Skills Survey (2014)
• **Focusing product development activities on growth markets** – boosted by events such as London 2012 and the Tour de France ‘Grand Depart’ (Yorkshire), the popularity of cycling continues to increase. Over 2m\textsuperscript{13} adults in England now cycle at least once a week.

The wider Peak District Cycling Strategy sets out a clear ambition for the area: ‘to be one of the premier places to cycle... using the iconic landscapes of the Peak District as the inspiration for a diverse cycling experience for everyone, encouraging sustainable travel and delivering lasting health, economic and community benefits’. The positioning of the National Park between large urban areas offers significant opportunity to grow the cycle tourism market. Increasing the number of recreational cycling visits from the surrounding area will help increase spending within the visitor economy, leading to an increase in jobs and GVA (circa £50k of visitor spend is estimated to deliver 1 FTE and every £1 of visitor spend generates 39p of GVA\textsuperscript{14}).

The cycle network continues to benefit from significant levels of investment. Following the successful re-opening of the four disused rail tunnels along the Monsal Trail, a further £5m is being invested via the second phase of the Pedal Peak project, including connecting the Trail at Bakewell into Matlock. Completion of the overall programme will help increase connectivity with urban populations and put some 3.5m people in reach of the cycle network in the National Park.

The Dales is also the location for the Eroica Britannia Vintage Cycle Ride which, in 2014 saw over 1,500 cyclists compete from 45 countries worldwide (including Thailand, Australia, Canada, Brazil, China, USA and parts of Europe), many bringing relatives and friends to spectate. The estimated economic impact of the event in Bakewell alone was over £1m and coverage of the race also featured on the BBC, ITV and SKY, showcasing the Dales to millions. The number of competitors is set to double in 2015.

Providing a better ‘welcome’ for cyclists generally will complement existing activity. Initiatives such as the National Park’s Cycle Places Friendly Grant have begun to address this but further work is needed to develop a critical mass of cycle friendly businesses in the Dales to help grow the contribution of cycling to the visitor economy.

There is also scope to further grow the walking market. Trail walking i.e. from place to place, often as part of a challenge or event is becoming increasingly popular and can generate significant economic benefits as walks are usually completed in groups and the longer distances involved require overnight stays. Opportunities exist to develop themed experiences for walkers along popular routes e.g. around local food and drink, to help increase spending.

• **Raising the profile of locally produced products and services** – encouraging more visitors to buy local products and use local services during their visit will help retain more of the visitor pound within the Dales economy.

The ‘Inspired by the Peak District’ brand is helping local businesses develop a marketing edge from their association with the high quality Peak District environment. Over 160 businesses from across the area are now signed up to the brand. However, there is significant scope to encourage more food & drink, creative, retail and other visitor economy businesses in the Derbyshire Dales to adopt the brand and raise its profile.

Creating opportunities for local businesses to showcase their products and services and supply new customers will also help stimulate growth within the sector. As well as encouraging more

\textsuperscript{13} Sport England Active People Survey 2014  
\textsuperscript{14} Colliers Stage 2 Report: D2N2 Tourism Impact Study 2014
local businesses to supply to each other, support is needed to better prepare Dales business to access wider procurement opportunities, including those associated with proposed tourism investments within the surrounding area.

- **Providing information the visitor wants, the way they want it** – in partnership with local businesses the District Council has established a network of Visitor Information Points (VIPs) at strategic locations across the district. As part of the current work programme, measures are being taken to slim down the level of support required from the Council and help VIPs become more sustainable in their own right.

From a Peak District perspective, the recent DMO review has reinforced the organisation’s primary role i.e. to market the area to visitors. A slimmer organisational structure has also emerged with greater emphasis on a partnership approach to delivery, working with both the public and private sectors. Going forward the DMO will promote two brands: the ‘Peak District’, retained as the attract brand with ‘Experience Derbyshire’ used to promote the wider county offer. Providing information on what visitors can do whilst they are here is therefore down to the industry, District Council and other local partners. To maintain a co-ordinated approach (whilst keeping costs down), more emphasis needs to be placed on partnering with other Peak District organisations on visitor information and shifting the focus from print to digital, prioritising material which showcases the best of what the Dales has to offer. Historic houses, parks and gardens, character market towns and villages, and local festivals and events remain priorities to feature, with emphasis on the authentic and high quality experiences on offer. Plugging gaps in visitor information should also form part of the approach where this will help generate further spend locally.

- **Maintaining vibrant visitor hubs** – the D2N2 Visitor Economy Action Plan identifies Ashbourne, Bakewell, Matlock and Matlock Bath as important visitor ‘hubs’ and destinations in their own right. As focal points for visitors offering a range of services and facilities it is important these centres remain vibrant, attractive places to visit and spend time. By keeping them clean and tidy, providing facilities such as public toilets and markets, supporting local events and as the local planning authority - the National Park Authority in the case of Bakewell - the District Council already plays its part. Several also have active business partnerships and/or town teams working at the local level to improve them. New activity needs to focus on supporting local partnerships to improve tourism infrastructure within visitor hubs and initiatives to enhance their individual appeal therefore enhancing the visitor experience.

- **Ensuring the plan delivers for local people as well as visitors** – it’s important that local people and the wider business community are involved in initiatives to encourage tourism and in helping promote the attributes of the area to visitors.

Community led rural development programmes like LEADER offer the opportunity for local people to deliver rural tourism initiatives including those involving the promotion of local heritage assets. These projects help to broaden the local tourism offer and spread economic benefits wider. There are also opportunities to encourage retailers, food and drink businesses and other service providers to be more ‘on message’ and play a role in promoting local things to see and do. A warm welcome and a little local knowledge can encourage visitors to extend their visit and contribute more to the local economy. It also encourages them to come back.

Sometimes negative perceptions of the visitor can cloud the wider benefits tourism investments can bring for residents. New visitor infrastructure, such as walking and cycle trails, offer significant opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of local people and these benefits need to be promoted too.
7. Priorities & Actions

The plan provides a framework for the District Council’s activities and contribution to partnership working over the next five years. The actions proposed under the three priorities are set out below (key actions in bold). Some will be delivered directly, others require a collaborative approach.

The views of key partners have been sought to inform the plan. However, the Council recognises the need to involve other stakeholders as it develops. Ongoing engagement will therefore take place to update and develop the plan’s actions. An inclusive approach to implementing the plan will be adopted, with the aim of delivering a first class experience to all visitors to the Dales.

**PRIORITY 1: Support businesses within the visitor economy to exploit key markets and supply chain opportunities**

**Actions:**

a) Implement the Pedal Peak Business Initiative within the Derbyshire Dales – creating a cycle friendly destination for all, supporting the development of cycle-friendly business clusters and encouraging cyclists to stay one or more nights

b) Support the delivery of the annual Eroica Britannia Vintage Cycle Ride and promote the 100 mile long route as a year round visitor attraction for the Dales, including:
   - mapping the route in both print and digital formats
   - signing the route throughout its length
   - supporting accommodation businesses along the route to provide a first class welcome and facilities for cyclists
   - making information available on local food and drink stops, public and community transport options and places to visit
   - marketing to promote cycling the route as a short break holiday or challenge

c) Encourage more food & drink, creative and retail businesses in the Derbyshire Dales to sign up to the Inspired by the Peak District brand

d) Work with partners to deliver ‘learn to pitch’ workshops and secure funding for a further trade fair event for the sector to help small and micro-businesses, including Inspired by the Peak District businesses, develop market and supply chain opportunities

**e) Work in partnership with the Peak District National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council to promote use of the Monsal Trail extension (Bakewell to Matlock) as part of the White Peak Loop**

f) Develop pilot walking experiences linked to public transport, encouraging visitors to sample local food and drink, made available as digital downloads

g) Organise business briefings ahead of key festivals and events to consider ways to increase the duration of visits and maximise local economic benefits
**PRIORITY 2: Promote the Derbyshire Dales and Peak District as an inspiring place to live, work and visit**

**Actions:**

a) Focus marketing campaigns on the year round short break market, promoting distinctive experiences linked to local products and events e.g. themed multi-day routes (two day ‘Dales Weekend Walks’) with accommodation and local business information available on-line

b) Work in partnership with Visit Peak District to promote the Derbyshire Dales as part of the Peak District brand and ensure these marketing opportunities are maximised by Dales businesses

c) Partner, where appropriate, with local agencies to produce joint visitor information showcasing the distinctive experiences on offer in the Derbyshire Dales, focusing increasingly on producing information in mobile friendly, digital formats

d) Pilot a ‘local ambassadors’ scheme within a visitor hub with traders, attraction owners and others, providing training and support to better equip businesses to welcome visitors and promote the area’s offer

e) Co-ordinate and maintain the existing network of Visitor Information Points in the Dales, working with providers to help them become more independent in the longer term

f) Work with the Peak District National Park Authority to develop a long term solution to providing visitor information services in Bakewell

g) Fill key gaps in visitor information, including the production of a Caravan and Camping guide for the Derbyshire Dales

**PRIORITY 3: Improve the quality of the visitor experience offered in the Derbyshire Dales**

**Actions:**

a) Improve directional signage and interpretation at key locations to improve visitor orientation including Matlock Bath to Cromford and off the Monsal Trail to Bakewell, Rowsley and Matlock and assist local partnerships access external funding to help improve tourism infrastructure within recognised visitor hubs

b) Implement a markets improvement initiative to help revitalise traditional stall markets in Dales towns

c) Work with partners to increase opportunities for businesses within the wider visitor economy to access customer service, supervisory, website and social media training within the Dales
d) Deliver an improved Matlock Bath Illuminations event from 2015, including additional entertainment, themed family events and the opportunity to purchase discounted tickets on-line in advanced, and encourage more local businesses to support the event

e) Help promote and facilitate hotel development opportunities at appropriate locations in the Dales and engage with providers to raise awareness of key visitor initiatives

f) Continue to pursue external funding for the ‘Dales Destinations’ programme in partnership with Derbyshire County Council to improve town centre public realm

g) Work with Business Peak District to promote the value of apprenticeships within the visitor economy, including raising awareness of higher level apprenticeships e.g. in Hospitality Management and Social Media & Digital Marketing, and grant incentives available to employers

h) Work with the University of Derby (Buxton Campus) to encourage more Dales businesses to consider student internships e.g. to help develop a businesses’ on-line activities or complete market research, to support the future development of the business

i) Encourage and assist the development of funding applications to LEADER and other programmes, including applications from tourism businesses to develop their accommodation to provide for people with disabilities

j) Maintain up to date data showing the size and value of the Derbyshire Dales Visitor Economy and undertake research with Peak District partners to improve understanding of visitor motivations and demands and local business performance to help inform future actions

8. Measures of Success

The plan aims to contribute to key outcomes identified within the Council’s Economic Plan. Other key indicators will also be used to monitor its impact:

- **Growth in the value of tourism** – 5% increase year on year (direct and indirect visitor expenditure) from baseline estimate of £315m in 2013 (Source: STEAM)
- **Growth in the number of staying visitors** – increase year on year from baseline estimate of 0.715m in 2013 (Source: STEAM)
- **Growth in GVA** – from £1,421m in 2010 to £1,600m by 2020 (Source: BRES)
- **Growth in workplace earnings** – reduce differential between Dales and Derbyshire median weekly pay from £6 in 2013 to zero in 2020 (Source: ASHE)

Targets for individual actions will be agreed in discussion with partners.