

Visit Leicester

TOURISM GROWTH PLAN 2026- 2031

*For Leicester
& Leicestershire*





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WELCOME

Our colourful, cultural, and historical city is beautifully framed by rolling green fields, waterways, and the prettiest, most idyllic towns and villages. The food scene perfectly reflects our multicultural communities, offering delicious food and drink from around the world.

For decades, our welcoming city and county has made space for new arrivals and communities, promoting the feeling that anyone can belong here.

From leading conservation at Twycross Zoo to the transformational technology at the National Space Centre and Space City – from the young and ancient woodlands of the National Forest to the city's astounding 2,000-year heritage and vibrant arts and culture – there is so much to uncover, explore, and enjoy.

This Tourism Growth Plan sets out how the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) for Leicester and Leicestershire will achieve this vision as a partnership, so that everyone is involved from its development to implementation and resourcing. The Local Authorities are unable to guarantee funding for the duration of this strategy due to the changing economic landscape within local government, and resources will therefore be reviewed annually. At the time of writing, four visitor economy partnerships across the United Kingdom have entered administration, underlining the need for this strategy to adapt to the national economic landscape.

Our aim is to bring this vision to life and help every tourism stakeholder develop, manage, and promote Leicester and Leicestershire so we can attract more visitors and grow both economically and socially. Whether you are a local business owner, visitor, community member, or anyone else connected to our visitor economy, this plan offers you a part to play. As the LVEP, Visit Leicester will take overall responsibility for the plan. This implementation will be overseen by the LVEP Board, supported by a Steering Group.

As a single lead body, Visit Leicester will provide clear leadership and avoid duplicating activity, though actions will involve collaboration with multiple stakeholders.

This is Leicester & Leicestershire

▼ **Our vision** is for our city and county to become known for its distinctive identity and its people. Our culture, heritage and creative industries all contribute to providing a warm welcome and our excellent partnerships ensure we are a leading leisure and business tourism destination.





CREATING AN OFFER FOR THE FUTURE

The UK Government's De Bois Review¹ showed that the visitor economy across England has for many years been fragmented. For that reason, Visit England introduced a national network of LVEP's to improve co-ordination and promote tourism more effectively.

Visit Leicester is proud to have become Leicester and Leicestershire's accredited LVEP in 2024 and in this plan we have closely noted Visit England's four key themes: accessibility and inclusion, regenerative tourism, skills and innovation, and international competitiveness. By following these, we can support the Government to realise its ambitions to have 50 million annual international visitors by 2030.

This is also a plan that highlights Visit Leicester's commitment to be ambitious, maximising our central location and proximity to London by increasing the visibility of our city and county and create growth in the Visitor Economy sector. We want to bring together everyone who engages in our visitor economy to focus on the activities that will influence investment and benefit us all.

In the following pages we are setting out clear priorities for the city and county over the next five years. We will outline exactly how to have influence and paint a clear picture of what success will look like. This plan focuses on a select number of high-impact actions designed to ensure the most efficient delivery of our vision.

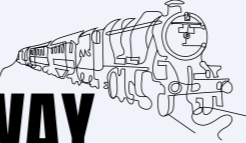
Leicester and Leicestershire already have a great deal to offer, and there is so much we can build on. With ambition and focused effort, we can establish our city and county as a destination with a culture and identity that the rest of the UK admires.

¹The de Bois Review: an independent review of Destination Management (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 2021)



HIGH OCTANE RACING THRILLS
Donington Park Circuit

The Great Central Railway
THE UK'S ONLY DOUBLE TRACK MAIN LINE HERITAGE RAILWAY



National Space Centre
THE UK'S TOP SPACE-RELATED ATTRACTION



A ROYAL HISTORY WRITTEN ON FILM
Belvoir Castle



Explore, reflect and discover at Leicester Cathedral Heritage & Learning Centre
1,000 YEARS OF CULTURE

Leicestershire County Cricket Club
MOST SUCCESSFUL ENGLISH CLUB IN T20

Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppes
PROVIDING A TASTE OF ENGLAND FOR MORE THAN 170 YEARS



TWYGCROSS ZOO
Leading global conservation and scientific research

BRADGATE PARK
800 acres of ancient landscape and herds of wild deer



BRINGING LEICESTER'S HISTORY TO LIFE
Leicester Museum & Art Gallery

TOP THEATRE, LIVE MUSIC AND INDEPENDENT CINEMA
St George's Cultural Quarter



Iconic location full of curry houses,
THE GOLDEN MILE
sari shops and jewellery stores

Everards Meadows
100s OF LOCALLY BREWED ALES
and 70 acres of scenic green space



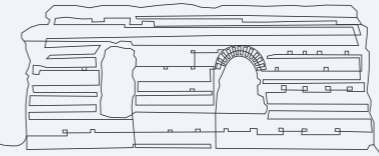
11 TIME ENGLISH & 2 TIME EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS
Leicester Tigers

More festivals and events than anywhere else in the UK
MOST FESTIVALS IN THE UK

FOLLOW KING RICHARD III'S STORY
From battlefield to burial



Jewry Wall
A REAL ROMAN EXPERIENCE



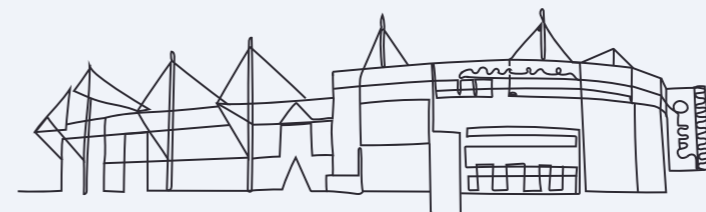
Explore more than 200 years of travel, trade, and leisure
FOXTON LOCKS

ENGLAND'S FIRST BROADLEAF FOREST IN OVER 900 YEARS
The National Forest



ALL THE THRILLS OF TOP TIER HORSE RACING
Leicester Racecourse

PREMIER LEAGUE AND FA CUP WINNERS LCFC
Leicester Comedy Festival
BIGGEST COMEDY ONLY FESTIVAL IN EUROPE



NEVILL HOLT FESTIVAL
Leicestershire's answer to the Hay Festival



Our last Tourism Growth Plan² aimed to make Leicester and Leicestershire a “leading leisure and business tourism destination”, creating a distinctive identity and improving productivity to deliver more with our existing assets.

There were four themed enablers to help us achieve our objectives which were: People & Skills, Connectivity, Places to Stay and A First-Class Welcome. Securing LVEP status for Visit Leicester in February 2024 has been a significant milestone for our visitor economy, providing a framework to accelerate growth by delivering a cohesive, and strategically managed destination.

This status provides a direct link to VisitEngland and unlocks a range of benefits by fostering stronger connectivity between local public and private sector partners, enabling more effective destination management, and leading to increased productivity and a more compelling and cohesive product offer over the next five years.

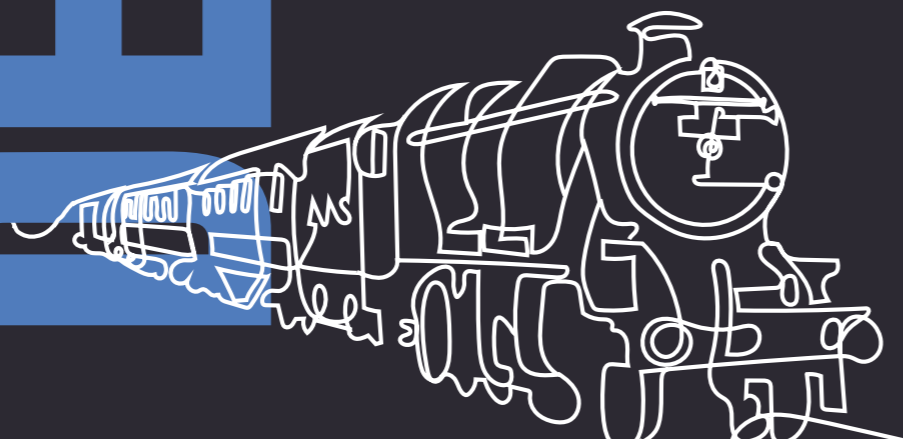
²Leicester & Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan (Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, 2020)



2020-2025

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

Creating A DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION



Our 2020-2025 plan² recognised the need for a stronger, more distinctive identity for Leicester and Leicestershire. To address this, we ran countywide campaigns that, according to feedback from stakeholders in our most recent consultation, proved to be highly valuable and effective. Our campaigns have been seen by millions of people across the UK featuring in high profile magazines and newspapers e.g. Britain Magazine, The Guardian, and the Daily Express. The campaigns now form the basis of all our work around stories and brand and are spread across all our social media channels. As a result of this work, we have grown our social media presence to more than 18 million views on Facebook and Instagram with 2 million views a year on the Visit Leicester website. Since 2020 engagement on Instagram has grown by more than 4,500% and on Facebook by 3,200%. Audience growth has been similarly impressive, with Instagram followers increasing from 2,700 in 2020 to more than 19,000 at present.

We successfully developed and executed campaigns to enhance our local identity. For our historical ‘Uncover the Story’ campaign, we created a toolkit and guidelines, supported by a new image bank, securing funding from Visit Britain. The ‘Taste the Place’ campaign has been a key driver of growth and promotion for the city and county’s hospitality industry. Through this initiative, we developed restaurant and café guides and partnered with key local influencers, including aligning with BID Leicester to help promote Leicester Restaurant

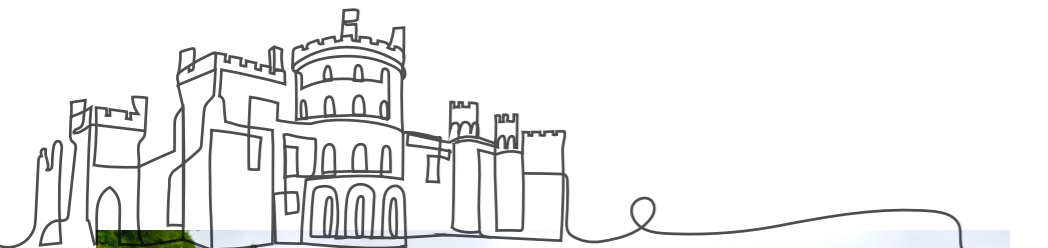
Week and Discover Melton as the nation’s Rural Food Capital. In addition, we partnered with the Leicestershire Curry Awards, bringing the title of England Curry Capital back to Leicester, which has successfully driven visits from journalists and international food influencers. Finally, we offered support to our museums and visitor centres, empowering them to become primary storytellers of place and gateways for visitors to appreciate the best of Leicester and Leicestershire.

²Leicester & Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan (Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, 2020)

Our Fitcation campaign successfully highlighted the range of outdoor activities, sports, and family days out available across the city and county, bringing together various walking trails, bike rides, and riverside adventures. To encourage longer visitor days and overnight stays, we created themed itineraries and trails for independent and group travellers.

Highlights included five new trails promoting the city’s heritage and three new Leicester Riverside maps. We created these in partnership with the Canal & River Trust and promoted them through both our ‘Uncover the Story’ and ‘Fitcation’ campaigns to encourage more walkers and cyclists to enjoy travelling alongside the water.





We have made excellent progress in regional connectivity by establishing the new Leicester City Bus Partnership. This foundational work is crucial for increasing visitors who arrive via buses and coaches. Our next priority will be to build upon this momentum by strengthening partnerships with wider transport providers, including airport and long-distance rail services, to increase visitors from further afield.



IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY

The launch of Visit Leicester's new website in May 2025 marked a significant milestone. Designed with accessibility as a top priority, the new, user-friendly site helps visitors find information faster and encourages them to stay longer, providing a modern platform with resources and support for local tourism businesses. Beyond the user experience, the website offers greater flexibility to deliver new campaigns and is financially more efficient, supporting Visit Leicester's long-term sustainability. The initial results confirm its impact: comparing the summer period of 2025 against the same period of the previous year, we have already seen an 18% increase in page views, a 12% rise in unique users, and a significant 257% growth in social media referrals.

Our increased focus on social media has significantly boosted both our growth and visibility. In 2025, our content reached over 2.7 million people on Facebook and Instagram, representing an increase of just over 20% year-on-year. Crucially, more than 500,000 of these individuals do not follow our Visit Leicester pages, indicating a significant expansion into new audiences. This growth in visibility means the Visit Leicester brand is now more trusted, prominent, and widespread than ever before.

Other digital improvements have included integrating hotel bookings and ticketing and supporting SMEs and micro businesses to highlight their offer through better digital knowledge. By leading presentations at Leicester Business Festival, we have offered guidance and shared best practice on topics from AI to social media.

A team of volunteer tourism ambassadors have been recruited from city neighbourhood communities to support the visiting family and friends market. The ambassadors have received training on the city's tourism offerings and, in partnership with Leicester College, have earned a Volunteer Tourism Ambassador award, including a Level 2 Customer Service certification.

We welcomed the opening of new leisure venues and restaurants, alongside a 47% increase in city bed spaces, successfully meeting our objective to expand the range and offerings of new hotels. Since 2020, we have actively promoted the area as a business tourism destination to increase meetings and conferences. While a dedicated team was established with funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership, the initiative's launch unfortunately coincided with the global pandemic. This unforeseen challenge impacted our ability to achieve the desired return on investment. As a result, the business tourism team was strategically realigned in 2022 to optimise resources and adapt to the new economic landscape.

The People and Skills section, identified as a key enabler, involved several actions aimed at building a sub-regional centre of excellence, supporting placements, and fostering best practice. A key success was establishing stronger working relationships with further education colleges. While the full scope of the planned work was paused due to capacity and resourcing challenges, these foundational partnerships position us well to advance this important agenda in the next strategy.

We achieved success in developing our product offer, underpinned by impactful, subregional campaigns including 'Uncover the Story,' 'Taste the Place,' and 'Fitcation.' In 2025, we successfully launched 'Green Stays, Ways and Days' to promote sustainable travel and champion businesses using sustainable practices through detailed case studies. While there were ambitions for the sustainability campaign to be more extensive, the initial success provides a solid foundation for a more ambitious expansion when future funding becomes available.

We promoted discovery and creativity using cutting edge technology to enhance the experience of visitors through supporting high quality and large scale projects at attractions including Jewry Wall Museum and The National Space Centre as well as for festivals such as 'Bring the Paint' featuring Europe's tallest piece of street art, 'Light Up Leicester', giant moving puppet 'Storm' and new annual festival 'Old Town Festival'. We also broke Saturday footfall records with the mass crowds she attracted to the city centre.

In 2025, the team at Leicester Museums and Galleries earned recognition as one of 10 nominees for the VisitEngland Tourism Superstars award. This was the third time a finalist from Leicester and Leicestershire was selected, with Field Sport UK chosen as finalists in 2024 and Twycross Zoo in 2022. Complementing this, the Cathedral successfully opened its new

Heritage and Learning Centre, and the Jewry Wall Museum reopened its doors following significant investment to celebrate the city's rich Roman history. Further tourism growth is planned, with Leicester Museums and Galleries refurbishment and café development due to open in 2026.

Ongoing commitment to make the city centre an enjoyable, safer experience at night has been enhanced by BID Leicester initiatives, 'Best Bar None' scheme recognising 50 accredited licensed premises that go above and beyond and a funded nighttime first aid service in partnership with St John Ambulance. Leicester city centre regained its Purple Flag accreditation for the 5th time in January 2025 recognising the standards of excellence from the police, Leicester City Council and partners in managing the nighttime economy.

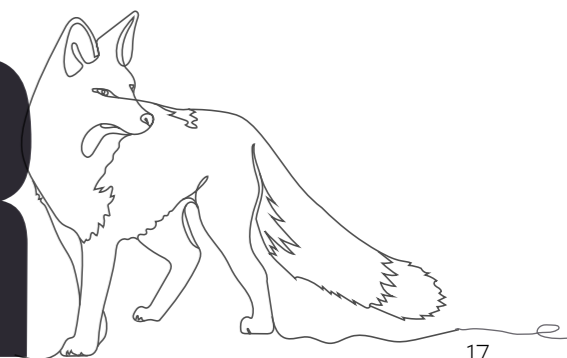
Across the county we collaborated closely with providers including the National Forest and Stoney Cove Dive Centre to create bookable outdoor and sports itineraries as part of the 'Fitcation' campaign. By supporting events like the East Midlands Food Festival, Artisan Cheese Fair and British Pie Awards we brought our 'Taste the Place' campaign to life.

We created more bookable product in the county for our 'Uncover the Story' theme and encouraged residents to become a #HomeTourist. That meant we could capitalise on the opportunities brought by Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) around Leicestershire.



Our consultation for this plan revealed many stakeholders who had tapped into our tourism campaigns with success, felt that partnership working was in a strong position and wanted to build on what has been achieved over the last five years.

Developing OUR PRODUCT OFFER



ECONOMIC VALUE
OF THE VISITOR
ECONOMY ROSE TO

£2.5 BILLION

32.04 MILLION

VISITORS WERE WELCOMED TO LEICESTERSHIRE

23,133

PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED IN THE
SECTOR ACROSS THE COUNTY

10.33 MILLION PEOPLE
VISITED
THE CITY

19.23
MILLION

DAY VISITORS
IN THE COUNTY



WHERE WE ARE NOW

The 2024 STEAM³ report reflects that Leicester and Leicestershire's visitor economy is growing. The economic value of the visitor economy rose sharply to £2.558 billion – 33.7% higher than before the pandemic. This exceeds the target we set out in the last Tourism Growth Plan, to increase the economic impact of tourism to £2.1 billion by 2025. In 2024, Leicester and Leicestershire welcomed 32.04 million visitors. Of these, 21.71 million people visited the county and 10.33 million visited the city.

³Positive Growth for Leicester and Leicestershire Visitor Economy (Visit Leicester, 2025)

The total number of day visitors increased to over 28 million, although this remains slightly below pre-pandemic levels. There were 19.23 million day visitors in the county and 8.81 million in the city. Our target set in 2019 was to increase day visitors from 31 million to 33.1 million, but this was impacted by the pandemic. We will have more work to do to reach this.

Overnight stays accounted for an average of 44.5% of total economic impact of the visitor economy, and the number of visitors staying here rose to 3.994 million in 2024, which is more than before the pandemic. The county saw 2.477 million staying visitors, and the city saw 1.517 million. Family and friends accounted for the most overnight stays, just slightly above stays in serviced accommodation. In the last Tourism Growth Plan, a target had been set to increase staying visitors to 4.6 million. This was also impacted by the pandemic, but Leicester and Leicestershire continue to see growth in the number of staying visitors.

The number of tourism-related jobs has grown with the majority found in food, drink, and retail sectors. More than 23,133 people are now employed in the sector across the city (8051 jobs) and county (15,082 jobs). This is not just an increase from the previous year but also surpasses pre-pandemic employment levels in the sector during 2019.



LISTENING TO VOICES

Across Leicester & Leicestershire

We engaged with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss their hopes, challenges, and ambitions for our visitor economy. Specifically, we asked them to identify the strengths of Leicester and Leicestershire, which markets they aspired to serve, and what they felt success would look like for the LVEP by 2031.

These questions formed the foundation for several online and in-person focus group meetings and forums that consulted with stakeholders. An online survey brought further insights, gathering responses from a wide range of sector specialists, including venues, hospitality, attractions, festivals, museums, sport, transport, colleges, universities, parks, and hotels.

STRENGTHS

Leicester has a unique cultural offer reflected in its food, festivals and communities. Coupled with an ability to host high-quality and large-scale events, such as the longstanding Leicester Comedy Festival, Bring The Paint and Download Festival, our destination puts on a diverse range of events and festivals to raise our profile nationally and internationally.

Leicester and Leicestershire offer excellent public realm, beautiful natural spaces and waterways, a string of urban and rural national attractions and all within a central location with strong air, road, and rail links. This makes for an ideal place for short breaks that offer genuine and meaningful experience.

With three prestigious universities that attract students from all over the world, we have the potential to highlight an offer with international appeal.

Leicester and Leicestershire boast a rich heritage, particularly in their historical and culinary offerings, including a growing artisan food scene, diverse flavours, and a network of historic market towns, attractions, and railways.

There is a keen sense of local pride in the region, which many feel remains an undiscovered gem with significant potential for growth. These themes are seen as excellent foundations for future development.

WEAKNESSES

Stakeholders identified an opportunity to enhance the promotion of the Leicester and Leicestershire region. They noted that a more cohesive branding and messaging strategy could better highlight the area's unique offerings, especially for an international audience.

Strengthening the coordination of events and expanding promotional efforts beyond a local audience would be beneficial. The region's cultural 'hidden gems' are not widely marketed and could be better highlighted through a more collaborative marketing strategy.

A key area for development is the overnight accommodation infrastructure. While the city has an ample supply of beds, there is a need for better overnight options for visitors of rural areas, encouraging longer, multi-day visits and maximise overnight stays.

OPPORTUNITIES

There are significant opportunities in aspirational markets. The trend for affluent professionals who are seeking high-quality, authentic, value-led experiences is a wonderful opportunity to build upon our natural and heritage attractions. We can capitalise on this trend by creating and delivering new product that enables longer stays.

There is significant potential to attract business travellers who bring a bigger spend, will make use of business or conference facilities, and may want to mix work with leisure or family time.

Major events are an opportunity to cluster or theme itineraries together while our multicultural nature brings potential for international tourism. Friends and family come to visit residents, but also students, and that means we can work closely with universities to highlight our offer.

Multiple stakeholders expressed their interest in increasing shared campaigns, underpinned by data and more digital marketing support.

THREATS

Enhancing a sense of welcome and security in the city centre should remain a priority. We have observed a shift in spending habits among older individuals and families, who are visiting less, even as business costs and staffing expenses continue to rise. To address these challenges, there is an opportunity to secure more stable, long-term funding for tourism events.

While public transport support schemes exist, they are often short-term. Extending service hours on weekends and evenings would significantly improve the ease of connecting multi-site visits and encourage longer stays.

The tourism landscape for England is competitive; with the continuing high cost of living, visitors want to make sure they make the right choice. There are many places to visit that are two hours from London and could therefore provide visitors with an extended day or weekend trip close to London. It is a challenging time to enhance the region's visibility but vital if we are to become a real contender as people consider their options for business and leisure travel.

The high street is evolving with changing consumer behaviour, opening up opportunities for new uses like leisure venues, more restaurants and cafes, and hotels—mostly run by independent businesses that add character and personality to our city and towns.



THE VISITOR ECONOMY

National Picture

In 2024 Government announced the ambitious target for the UK to welcome 50 million international visitors a year by 2030⁴. Following the announcement, Government set up the Visitor Economy Advisory Council to work on the Visitor Economy Growth Plan. Key objectives include driving economic growth across England's regions, boosting sector productivity, employment and innovation and maximising the social and economic value of the Visitor Economy. Our Tourism Growth Plan aligns with these objectives, and the following action plan ensures that we are effectively responding to the specific opportunities and challenges in Leicester and Leicestershire.

⁴New ambition for 50 million annual visits to UK announced by Tourism Minister (Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2024)



The significance of the 'Purple Pound'

Every visitor deserves a seamless experience, yet the needs of disabled people are often overlooked. The market dubbed the 'purple pound' represents a significant and growing community that is eager to explore; in fact, visitors with impairments spend an average of £740 per inbound visit - surpassing the general average. The £14.6 billion spent annually in England highlights a powerful demand for inclusion. Investing in accessibility is a transformative step that goes beyond the bottom line. It signals a deep respect for a significant and growing demographic, fostering a sense of loyalty and belonging that can only be built when a community feels authentically valued.

Opportunity: Leicester and Leicestershire businesses and attractions have an opportunity to become more inclusive and accessible to the visitors we welcome.

Socially speaking, tourism is good for us

According to Visit Britain's report, 'The Social Value of Tourism',⁵ people who live and work in the communities most impacted by tourism often feel more connected to their community. The same report found that 72% of the British public are proud that the UK welcomes overseas visitors, and a similar number report feeling healthier or more replenished after traveling within the UK. Importantly, when they do travel, leaving the place better than they found it is high on their list of priorities.

⁵VisitEngland The Social Value of Tourism Report (VisitBritain, Public First, 2025)

Opportunity: Leicester and Leicestershire can benefit from a greater sense of connection by fostering communities where people live and work amongst tourists.

Wellbeing wins for solo day trips

According to Visit Britain's report on domestic day visits in 2024⁶, spending on domestic tourism day visits continued to rise last year, though at a lower rate, while total day visits overall decreased by 12%.

It was those in the 'family life stage' who accounted for the biggest total spending increase here. Data shows a significant difference in average spend solo day visits (without children) saw an average spend of £61 per person, compared to an average of £37 per person for visits that included children. Additionally, day visits that incorporated a wellbeing experience continued to have the highest average spend overall.

⁶GB Day Visitor 2024 report, domestic day visits (VisitBritain, 2025)

Opportunity: Spending on family day trips with

children seems to be slowing down but there may be an emerging opportunity for product development. Day trippers in that life stage still have money to spend, especially if they can leave the kids at home and take a day out to focus on wellness.

Overnight trips are decreasing.

VisitBritain's reporting on domestic overnight trips shows a 10% decrease between 2023 and 2024, and a 14% decrease compared to 2022 levels. However, overall spend is increasing with trips to visit friends and family, along with holidays, noted as the main reasons for taking an overnight trip. Large towns and cities remain the most popular destinations.

Trips for three nights or less were the most common duration, with serviced accommodation still the most popular choice for overnight stays. While camping, glamping, and caravan trips reduced compared to previous years, the average spend was highest for those using self-catering property rentals.

Although many visits in England were made by residents, both inbound trips to the UK and associated spending are rising. Conversely, the VisitEngland 2024 Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions shows that visitor numbers remain well below pre-pandemic levels, with the slight increase in growth primarily fuelled by overseas visitors.

Opportunity: Domestic residents are taking fewer overnight trips but when they do travel, they are

spending more. There is still an opportunity to promote visits to friends and family encouraging them to stay more than one night and to capitalise on these higher spends.

Key tourism trends and challenges

With working patterns and work/life balance re-evaluated during the pandemic, there is a continuing trend for 'Bleisure' travel; that's business trips combined with extended leisure stays.

People are also looking for more meaningful experiences and connections to culture and nature. Whether that is travelling with the environment in mind, giving back to conservation projects or the local environment, or seeking once-in-a-lifetime experiences, we want to see our time and money go further and mean more.

Tech is playing a huge part with more bookings becoming automated and mobile phones increasingly used to source information, check-in, pay, cancel, or board.

Opportunity: Travellers want technology to create seamless, frictionless bookings for personalised, versatile trips. They are also seeking experiences that immerse them in nature and culture and take care of the environment.

*for Leicester &
Leicestershire*

AWISDOM

▼
*To become a leading leisure and business
tourism destination built on local pride, strong
partnerships, excellent skills and a unique
identity that compels visitors.*



OUR PRIORITIES

To firmly establish Leicester and Leicestershire as a leading destination, we want every stakeholder to play an active and vital role in our visitor economy's success. From major city centre attractions to rural coffee shops, our three key priorities are designed to welcome and unite every partner in our ambitious plans for growth.

We are setting out three key areas of focus for the next five years. These link to the opportunities we have noted when considering the national picture for the visitor economy. Underneath each of the priorities are objectives and actions which explain how we will go about delivering this plan, working together as a partnership.

Over recent months, three LVEPs have gone into administration, and we are aware that no funding or resourcing is guaranteed through Government, therefore this needs to be a plan that remains flexible as a working model. Along the way, we know it will be important to keep stakeholders informed about the progress we are making and celebrate success.

Showcase Leicester & Leicestershire's Offer

This priority focuses on the strategic marketing of the place - promoting our visitor attractions, events, and natural assets. By bringing the product offering together across the city and county, we can identify our strengths and strategically address areas for investment. Stakeholder feedback during the consultation highlighted that while many of Leicestershire's key assets are still 'hidden gems,' this presents a clear mandate to elevate our profile and ensure these exceptional offerings achieve the national recognition they deserve. We can change this through creative and targeted marketing campaigns, an authentic brand identity, an inspiring digital presence, engagement with

the travel trade and a varied events calendar. Showcasing Leicester and Leicestershire's offer through themed campaigns and a vibrant events calendar will enhance our position and profile, encouraging more visitors to stay longer.

Despite national evidence that domestic visitors are taking fewer overnight trips, when they do travel, they are spending more so we have an opportunity to promote visits to Leicester and Leicestershire through friends and family encouraging their visitors to stay more than one night and to capitalise on these higher spends. Our objective to use advocates to grow reach, ensures we will benefit from a greater sense of connection through fostering communities where people live and work.

Objective i:

Work with stakeholders on a minimum of three overarching campaign themes over five years

Key campaigns over the last five years have given us the vehicle to talk as a region with more impact than we have ever had. We will build on our existing achievements and focus on defining and promoting key, overarching themes that clearly highlight Leicester and Leicestershire's unique identity. These themes will be: Historic, Food & Drink, Public Realm & Countryside, Arts & Culture, and Sport.

Objective iii:

Create packaged itineraries to increase visitor stays

We can leverage the trend of business and leisure, capitalising on large attractions and develop packaged itineraries to engage visitors that are accessible, inclusive, and sustainable and that way get people to stay longer.

Objective ii:

Use local advocates to grow reach

The national picture shows us that while local families may still be affected by the cost of living, there is still a huge sense of pride from residents about where they are from. We can lean into this to encourage visiting friends and family, whether nationally or internationally, bolstered by our strong air, road, and rail links.

Objective iv:

Develop collective and group travel offer

National and international group visits represent a high-value market, with average spending significantly exceeding domestic levels (inbound average spend of £819 per visit compared to the domestic average of £266)⁹. Given that these visitors often spend nights in more than one location during their trip, we see a clear opportunity. Collaborating with local partners and with support from Visit England, we will actively explore new itineraries and bookable products to cater specifically to this high-spending market. We will use research to understand how these groups travel and spend their time, allowing us to strategically develop our offers and directly grow both visitor stays and overall spend.

⁹UK Tourism Facts & Figures 2025 (Tourism Alliance, 2025)



02

Become a Forward-Looking Destination

This priority highlights local pride and is focused on delivering a positive welcome and visitor experience through services developed using data intelligence, inclusive and regenerative practices, and strong skills progression, all which position Leicester and Leicestershire as a leading destination. By encouraging and supporting businesses to offer the highest quality experience, we can enhance long-term visitor satisfaction. Furthermore, capitalising on Visit Britain’s research that highlights the significant value of the ‘purple pound’—the greater spending power of disabled visitors on both day and overnight trips—we will better support Leicester and Leicestershire businesses and attractions to become more inclusive and accessible to all the visitors we welcome.

Leicester and Leicestershire are committed to making decisions based on accurate data that helps us understand the true potential of our visitor economy. Evidence reveals the motivations and perceptions of our visitors, including what might encourage them to stay longer. Today’s travellers want technology to create seamless, frictionless bookings for personalised, versatile trips¹⁰. Crucially, they are also seeking experiences that immerse them in nature and culture while taking care of the environment. We can also add to the visitor experience by acknowledging that sustainability and climate are becoming increasingly important to both leisure and business travellers. As visitors give more thought to their carbon output, there is an expectation that businesses will help them to reduce their impact. ¹⁰MIDAS - Full Research Report - Dec 2022 (VisitBritain, 2022)

National data reveals that day trips catered on wellness experiences continue to generate the highest average spend, suggesting that the adult-only market represents a key opportunity for increased

day-trip revenue. Regenerative tourism is a key priority for VisitEngland and VisitBritain and our LVEP will be collaborating closely with them to make sure this is championed as we deliver this plan. Regenerative tourism means visitors and residents ensure that that a destination is left in a better state than it was found. It goes beyond sustainable tourism which reduces negative impacts and fosters positive regeneration and wellbeing in the local environment and communities. Regenerative tourism actively works to enhance and improve a place ensuring the visitor economy creates value for local people, places, and the environment. Overall, it helps to promote a positive perception of tourism as a benefit to communities and environment.

Making sure that the infrastructure across Leicester and Leicestershire supports visitor needs is another key part of becoming an accessible, welcoming, and forward-looking destination. We will work closely with the national body to ensure accessibility and inclusion are considered at all stages of the visitor journey. This spans from how visitors

receive information about our destination and travel to the region, to the experience they have once they are here. The implementation of the right infrastructure will create a positive experience, making visitors more likely to return and recommend our destination.

To provide the best welcome, we will need a skilled workforce. We will focus on ensuring the industry can attract and retain skilled professionals. Our work will involve supporting local businesses, ensuring that skilled and enthusiastic volunteers are valued, and actively engaging residents in the region’s tourism efforts.

Objective v: Collect and act on data

Led by the LVEP, we will find out what gaps in our data exist and support businesses to feed into our research. We will collect and share the most accurate, useful data to consistently aid decision-making and take us forwards.

Objective vi: Promote regenerative tourism

Rather than simply reducing harm to the minimum, we want to help every initiative in our visitor economy to actively have a positive effect and people leaving places better than they are found. This is about progress, not perfection and will mean something different for everyone, whether that is increasing accessibility, inclusivity or becoming more sustainable. Visit England have free training and resources to support the LVEP and stakeholders in this area.

Objective vii: Support businesses and skills development

We want to present tourism as a career of choice. Involving colleges, universities, and employers, as the LVEP we will work together to understand what skills we need for the future and the most effective ways to provide them.



Maximise Impact with Strong Partnerships

To develop this plan, we consulted extensively with a wide range of local stakeholders. Partnerships are key to delivering the plan, and we want to encourage continued collaboration to increase our impact. We will achieve this by cross-promoting major events and pooling resources for more targeted and effective campaigns.

Objective viii: Strengthen the LVEP Board

We go further, and with greater impact, when we go together. Leaning on our LVEP status, we will proactively engage private, public, and third-sector stakeholders to strengthen existing district and local partnerships. Our aim is to ensure that we promote the same campaigns, connect our core messages, and that our Board has the right representation to effectively deliver on all our priorities.

Objective ix: Joint promotion of event calendar

We are already home to a diverse calendar of cultural experiences and excellent sporting events. By jointly promoting we can begin to address resourcing constraints, limited promotion, transport, and infrastructure. The outcome will be a stronger tourism offer, with daytrips converted into overnight stays and a cohesive programme of events.

Objective x: Grow business tourism

We have an opportunity to capitalise on our central location and create a strong offer for business travellers. We need to bring the right people together to build the business case for state-of-the-art facilities and think creatively about partnerships that can serve the growing trend for mixing business with leisure.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities for the different organisations that make up the visitor economy in Leicester and Leicestershire are illustrated in the diagram on the next page, and it will be for each of them to take forward the implementation of the Tourism Growth Plan through the mechanism of the LVEP. Delivering this Tourism Growth Plan requires a stronger partnership approach. To achieve our objectives means strong collaboration and coordination across all our partners - public, private and third sector. All have a part to play and there are clear benefits of aligning investment, development and marketing which are detailed further in the actions table.

Role of Visit Leicester

Visit Leicester as the accredited LVEP, has a leadership and enabling role - making the right connections, bringing influence to bear, refining activity and reporting progress to VisitEngland. It will bring the main support and public sector organisations together along with business representatives through its schedule of regular board and working group meetings. Visit Leicester acts as a catalyst for a thriving tourism sector, sustainably growing the value of the visitor economy. All activities are linked to national, regional, and local strategic economic and tourism priorities focused by data and intelligence, working to a set baseline and with clear targets for the sector.

Visit Leicester has used the Tourism Growth Plan and the process of its development to build strong, meaningful and outcome driven partnerships, focused on key priorities.



- ▶ Oversight of the Tourism Growth Plan
- ▶ Leadership, advocacy and influence across the sector
- ▶ Visitor economy business networks
- ▶ Partnership development – within region and beyond
- ▶ Destination marketing
- ▶ Market insights & market data
- ▶ Business advice, support & signposting
- ▶ Product development e.g. themes, trails, packages

Role of the Local Visitor Economy and Advisory Board

The Advisory Board has a private sector chair who attends the Place Marketing Coordination Group to report on progress to the key strategic partners (including senior council officers). The role of the Board is to lead the implementation of the Tourism Growth Plan and monitor actions and progress. Whilst resources are stretched for all partners, the Tourism Growth Plan provides a framework against which funding should be aligned – and so should make the allocation of resources more efficient and effective. Any emerging funding streams to replace previous funds such as UK Shared Prosperity Fund, that are applicable to the visitor economy should be allocated to the priorities and actions in this Plan. As resource becomes ever-more tightly constrained, nationally and locally, partners will need to consider how and for what purpose financial resources should be pooled. The Advisory Board will consider resourcing implications of delivering the actions outlined in the Tourism Growth Plan, consider any opportunities arising and what actions they need to take forward, working within the strategic framework provided.

To mitigate risks, action planning or working groups will be developed to work on the actions set out in the Tourism Growth Plan. These groups will be made up of key stakeholders who will take a lead role and responsibility for monitoring progress and ensuring outcomes are shared with stakeholders. The groups will also identify issues and barriers and facilitate discussions.

- ▶ Oversight and guidance
- ▶ Review & challenge
- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Quality control
- ▶ Working towards better accessibility and sustainability



ACTIONS AND MEASURES

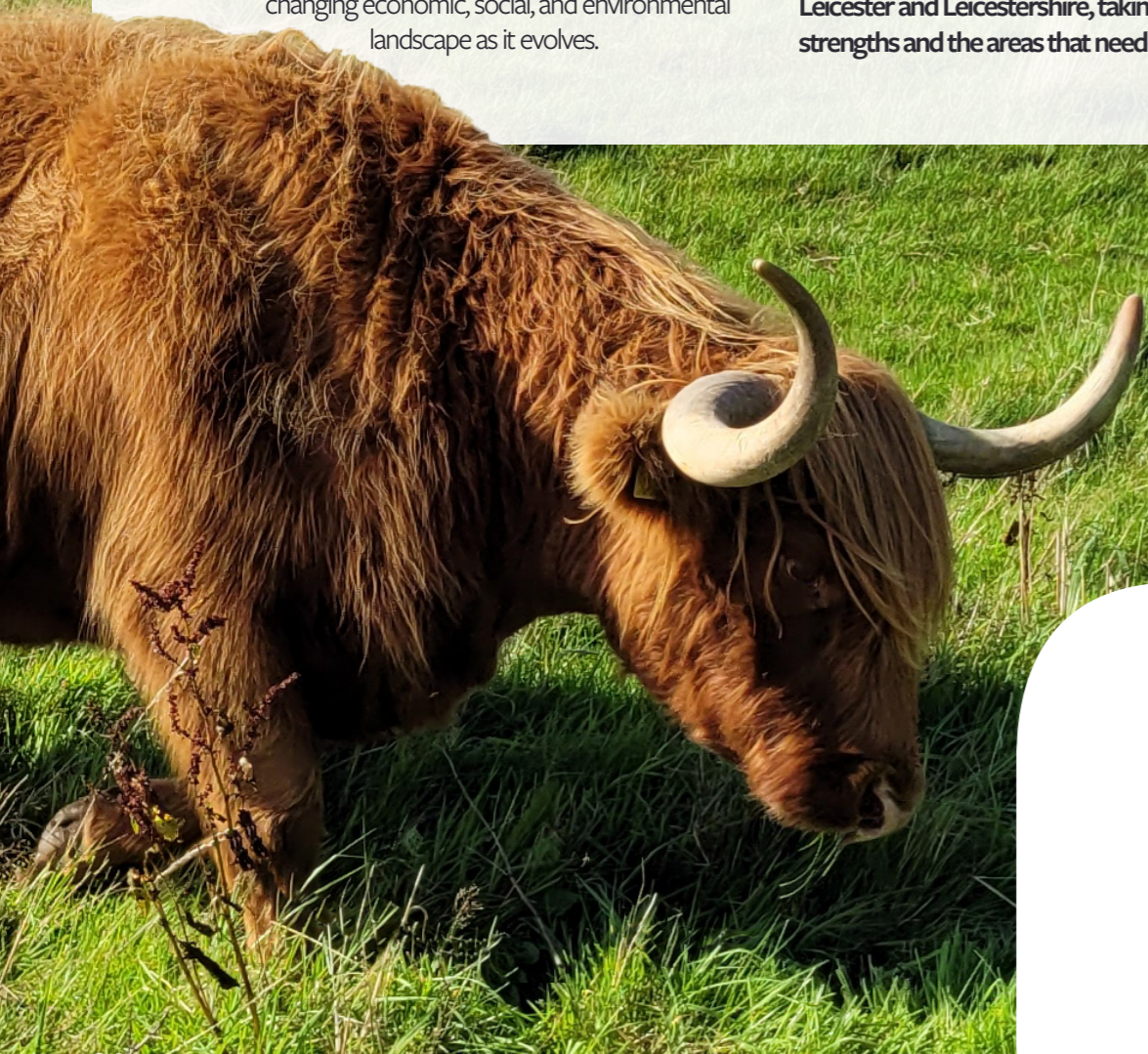
of success

We will make sure the Leicester and Leicestershire visitor economy grows through increasing visitor days and overnight stays and spend. With a collaborative approach, we will create a welcoming destination that highlights our unique offer.

Within each of the three priority areas we have created objectives and actions that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. Every action aims to enhance economic and cultural benefits for visitors, businesses, and residents. These will be under constant review, recognising the changing economic, social, and environmental landscape as it evolves.

As the LVEP, Visit Leicester will lead the plan's development, but it will take a wide range of stakeholders to deliver it. Though funding may not be available at this stage to deliver everything outlined in this plan, it should be used as the framework to align current or emerging funding. A number of working groups will be established with LVEP partners, and these groups will be tasked with detailing how each action will be resourced and delivered.

The following actions maximise opportunities for Leicester and Leicestershire, taking account of its strengths and the areas that need to develop.



Priority 1	Showcasing L&L's Offer	Indicator	Measures & Targets	Timeframe	Resource & Delivery Mechanism
Objective (i) Collaborate with stakeholders on a minimum of three overarching campaign themes over five years.					
Action	Establish a Theme Development Working Group of key partners to produce a development and delivery plan for the themes – Historic, Food & Drink, Public Realm & Countryside, Arts & Culture, and Sport.	L&L Theme Development Group 5-year campaign plan for each of the thematic products. VE Stakeholder survey	Annual campaign success measured through surveys, website traffic and social media 10% increase in overnight stays, 10% increase in visitor spend	Establish group in first 12 months then annual campaigns	Theme Development Working Group will develop an annual plan for each theme including how they will be delivered and resourced
Action	Produce marketing collateral to highlight L&L's unique cultural offer through its city and market towns, to national and international visitors. This will be accessed through a shared asset library to use by partners.	Extended products & marketing collateral / % awareness of VL brand Visitor surveys	Feedback from attractions -70% positive, 10% annual increase in VL web traffic Increase media coverage	Produce collateral annually per campaign	Marketing Working Group to be established. The group will develop a marketing plan including detail of how it will be resourced and delivered.
Action	Use website, social media, and PR to amplify L&L image and build relationships with key travel, national and regional media including press trips.	Unique website users & social media engagement % awareness of VL brand	10% increase VL stats 25% increase in PR media coverage	Annually per campaign	Visit Leicester will be the first port of call for web traffic, social media and PR
Objective(ii) Use local advocates to grow reach.					
Action	Capitalise on local and civic pride, by promoting engagement in the ambassador scheme widely and specifically link it with events programme, to engage the VFR market.	% increase of residents engaging in scheme Increase in VFR No of new ambassadors No of events attended	Visitor & ambassador surveys 70% positive feedback	Review and refine after 24 months	Visit Leicester will promote scheme widely across region working with City Tourism Officer.
Action	Create an image bank of photography and video to use in social media campaigns to increase engagement with influencers e.g. 'Live Like a Local'	Unique website users & social media engagement References in national media via PR campaigns Directory of influencers	VL stats Media coverage up 10% 10% increase No. of influencers directly engaging with VL	Implement year 2 Review in year 3	Visit Leicester will host image bank and lead social media campaigns
Objective (iii) Create packaged itineraries to increase visitor stays.					
Action	Use the Theme Development Working Group to share visitor demographic segmentation and conduct research into what makes people turn a day trip to overnight stay e.g. promoting late shows and breakfast and brunch offer	Visitor segmentation data and research Marketing collateral	Visitor surveys 70% positive feedback 10% increase in overnight stays	Implement in year 2	Theme Development Working Group to create action plan.
Action	Complete an audit, mapping accommodation product and experience to identify gaps and opportunities to develop itineraries	Hotel occupancy levels Overnight and short break itineraries for each theme Increase in stays Targeted itineraries, bookable products	Visitor numbers increase by 10%; number of itineraries downloaded increase by 10%	In year 2	Accommodation & Itinerary Working Group to create action plan detailing resourcing and delivery mechanism
Objective (iv) Develop collective and group travel offer.					
Action	Promote VE training offer to use and create bespoke training for front line staff to ensure L&L is welcoming visitors and improving its profile, locally, nationally, and internationally.	% visitors rating satisfaction with venue/attraction customer service Number of businesses signed up to/completed training	Visitor Survey 70% positive Increase in No of customer service awards Reviews e.g. Trip Advisor Stakeholder Survey	In year 3	Visit Leicester to disseminate from VisitEngland and Visit Britain
Action	Identify where there are significant barriers to group or collective travel and what might be done to mitigate these. Introduce consistent approach through a best practice guide to guide the roll out of activity.	Group Travel Guide	Visitor Survey 70% positive	Year 3 & 4	Group Travel Working Group to create Group Travel Plan with detail on resource and delivery mechanisms



Priority 2	Being a Forward-looking Destination	Indicator	Measures & Targets	Timeframe	Resource & Delivery Mechanism
Objective (v) Collect and act on data.					
Action	Develop a shared data repository and incentivise businesses to ensure data is shared e.g. from visitor surveys.	Database	No of businesses using it Visitor surveys 70% positive	Year 3	Data Working Group to create Data Action Plan to include delivering data repository and reporting o data to wider sector.
Action	Evaluate the benefit of STEAM. Ensure quarterly and annual reporting and celebrations to keep stakeholders informed.	Economic impact study Quarterly events VE resources	STEAM report Event attendance Increase in % utilising VE resources	Year 4	Data Working Group to create Data Action Plan to include delivering data repository and reporting o data to wider sector.
Objective (vi) Promote regenerative tourism.					
Action	Establishing a working group to support regenerative tourism initiatives such as a responsible tourism action plan.	No. of products featuring regenerative tourism	25% increase in regenerative tourism focussed product Visitor surveys No if users clicking through website via regenerative	In first 12 months	Regenerative Tourism Working Group to create action plan.
Action	Align with VE work around regenerative tourism and ensure their training kits as well as any other best practice and guidance is disseminated to businesses e.g. sustainability self audits.	Tourism Growth Plan quarterly and annual reporting mechanisms No. of businesses reached	Stakeholder survey 70% positive feedback	In first 12 months	Regenerative Tourism Working Group to create action plan.
Objective (vii) Support businesses and skills development.					
Action	Complete a sector-wide audit of current skills provision and challenges, using the LSIP. Listening to businesses and learning from what they are already doing to support staff; we will track business support needs and advocate for targeted interventions.	Through BSP and LSIP	Business feedback 70% positive	In the first 12 months	Skills Working Group to create action plan including resourcing and delivering audit.
Action	Establish new partnerships with HE and FE and use existing partnerships to promote tourism as a rewarding career path and collect data on available tourism and hospitality courses and including take up.	No. of tourism and hospitality courses No. of engaged businesses No. of colleges / universities engaged. No. of students enrolled in tourism and hospitality courses	Awareness of VL brand Business feedback 10% increase in No. attending events	Year 2	Skills Working Group to create action plan including resourcing and delivering detailed actions.
Action	To create a more connected business community, we will provide a framework for listening to businesses, sharing information, and celebrating achievements. The framework will enable VL to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote relevant industry events to our business network. Implement a targeted B2B communications strategy that includes a monthly e-newsletter and a dedicated LinkedIn group to share information and signpost opportunities. Develop sector case studies e.g. celebrating industry entrepreneurship. Provide a forum to discuss business issues such as digital developments / AI. 	No. of businesses engaging and receiving support Quarterly events to celebrate good practice and business successes. Event attendance survey Website content	Awards and business feedback 10% event attendance monitoring numbers who attend, versus registrations 70% positive feedback from attendees, and those wanting to attend future events.	Year 4	Visit Leicester will share information through its newsletter and quarterly events.



Priority 3	Maximising Impact with Strong Partnerships	Indicator	Measures & Targets	Timeframe	Resource & Delivery Mechanism
Objective (viii) Strengthen the LVEP Board					
Action	Ensure the Board is representative of the visitor economy and has the right people to help the LVEP deliver on its priorities. Board will be upskilled regarding data collation and interrogation.	LVEP Board representation	Board members are representative of sector and confident in ability to interrogate data.	Over 5 years	LVEP Board will identify gaps and attend training in areas such as data intelligence where required.
Action	Meet regularly with neighbouring LVEPs to explore joint activities especially around encouraging international visitors.	Joint working programmes	Quarterly reporting	Over 5 years	Visit Leicester will set up regular check in meetings with neighbouring LVEP partners.
Action	Advocate for the visitor economy by engaging with the development of key strategies and implementation plans, particularly around economic growth. Submit formal input to any new Local Plans to ensure they reflect, wherever possible and appropriate, the priorities of the Tourism Growth Plan.	Engagement with other Departments and Directorates	Quarterly reporting	Over 5 years	Visit Leicester will ensure reporting mechanisms and timely reports internally and externally.
Objective (ix) Joint promotion of event calendar					
Action	Develop and implement a cross-promotional calendar and improve messaging through websites and social media channels.	Number of visits and visitors / where visitors come from / marketing collateral	Stakeholder's engagement metrics, e.g. click-through rates. VL stats Visitor surveys	First 12 months	Marketing Working Group will come up with action plan to ensure implementation of a cross promotional calendar.
Action	Using the Themes Development Group we will identify specific events to amplify e.g. Comedy Festival, through coordinated cross-promotion.	Bookable product and increase in overnight stays	Visitor surveys	Year 2-3	Theme Development Working Group will identify key events.
Objective (x) Grow business tourism.					
Action	Use existing business tourism promotion models such as the Venue Directory and make a business case to partners and stakeholders to adopt an economic strategy to grow business tourism.	Partners secured to develop the business case. Economic impact	Stakeholder survey Economic impact study	Year 4 - 5	Visit Leicester will explore different models to present as options.

*for Leicester &
Leicestershire*



*To become a leading
leisure and business tourism
destination built on local
pride, strong partnerships,
excellent skills and a unique
identity that compels visitors.*

Visit Leicester

AVISION

