

Visitor Economy Strategy

CONSULTATION



Bassetlaw
DISTRICT COUNCIL
— North Nottinghamshire —



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Introduction



This strategy is written in the context of reducing resources for a non-statutory service, that drives the need to deliver a cost-effective tourism service by working closely with other partners –including the private sector. Our challenge is to provide a coherent approach to tourism for a future which may not even provide match funding to leverage external funding.

Tourism is an important contributor to the national economy and whilst Bassetlaw has attracted visitors over the years, there is untapped potential. There are several diverse reasons for this.

We have a weak offer of ‘place’ and little recognition in terms of geography on a national or local level. The Invest in Bassetlaw project has clearly identified this as an issue and the sub brand of North Nottinghamshire is now a key component of our marketing strategy for the district and its’ assets.

Whilst we have some excellent natural and historical noteworthy points, we have little historical infrastructure to exploit. For example, Pilgrim Fathers –being a secretive, oppressed society- left little behind them and no original infrastructure remains. Important privately owned assets such as Welbeck Abbey and Worksop Manor are highly significant but the owners wish them to remain private property.

Whilst Clumber Park gets around 750,000 visits a year – most are local ‘afternoon in the park’ visits with little economic impact. Clumber is a National Trust property and has been traditionally marketed as part of their national portfolio rather than a local offer. However, there are indications of a much closer future working relationship, which is most welcome.

Some of our other assets are:

- Creswell Crags
- Pilgrim Fathers Origins
- Industrial heritage. ie Chesterfield Canal
- Ducal estates of Welbeck, Hodsock, Osberton, Clumber, and Thoresby
- Myths and legends including Robin Hood
- Worksop Priory and gatehouse
- Progresses of Henry VIII and James I
- Natural countryside and Market towns

This list is not exhaustive but gives a flavour of the diversity of offer. There are many unconnected offerings which are not currently co-ordinated and have no natural or obvious relationship.



Value to the Economy

Assessing the economic impact which tourism brings is not straightforward. The methodology known as STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Assessment Method) is widely quoted but is a blunt instrument.

The value (2009) to the local economy is quoted at £145.5 million which is broken down into:

- Accommodation £7.01 million
- Food and drink £26.70 million
- Recreation £10.86 million
- Shopping £36.63 million
- Transport £13.68
- Indirect expenditure £36.38 million
- VAT £14.23 million

Some of the above are not direct measures of the impact of tourism or visitors (e.g. shopping value is a formula applied to total shopping spend and is therefore assumptive)

Tourist numbers of visitors are estimated at:

- 120,000 at serviced accommodation (Hotels, B&Bs)
- 33,000 in non-serviced accommodation (camp sites etc.)
- 3,515,000 day visitors

There is another metric for 'staying with Friends and relatives' (SFR) which has not been included (176,000). It is clear from the above that the vast majority of visitors to the district (>90%) are day visitors, rather than staying overnight.

Accommodation stock comprises:

1 Hotel with greater than 50 beds (total 156 beds)
 11 Hotels between 11 and 50 beds (total 786 beds)
 49 sub 10 bedroom hotels/B&Bs (total 446 beds)
 Total 1388 beds

Non serviced accommodation (self-catering, caravan and camp sites) provide a further 2070 sleeping spaces).

Comparisons with other districts is not straightforward since (at around £2,000 per STEAM report) many districts do not commission

a report and are often reluctant to share expensive data. As a guide to the scale of the impact of tourism in the county, the table below (from 2006 STEAM) compares the value across the Nottinghamshire Districts.

District	Value (£million)
Ashfield	113.8
Bassetlaw	143.3
Broxtowe	123.6
Gedling	109.6
Mansfield	102.2
Newark & Sherwood	203.9
Nottingham City	465.9
Rushcliffe	115.6
Total	1,377.9

Tourist Numbers	County	% County	% Bassetlaw
Serviced Accommodation	1,390,000	3.6	3.1
Non serviced	350,000	0.9	0.9
SFR	1,630,000	4.2	4.6
Day visitors	35,060,000	91.3	91.4
Total	38,420,000		

To over-simplify, it could be argued that with the serviced accommodation level being low in comparison with the rest of the county at 3.1% of the bed stock, we need to raise our number of beds to 3.6% to attain the average which equates to a further 224 beds- i.e. : four 50+ hotels.

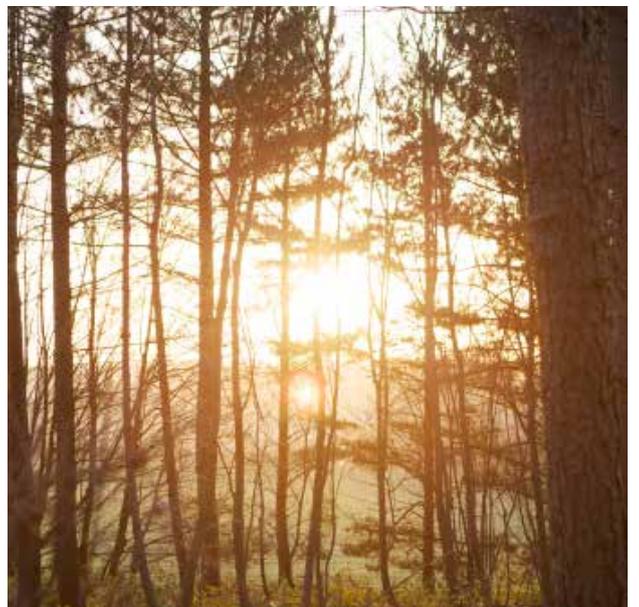
This calculation ignores the fact that most hotels are in the city of Nottingham but is indicative that the district suffers from a hotel shortage.

A further indicator is that on a County-wide basis 7.8% of the value of tourism is accommodation spend, whilst the figure for Bassetlaw is 4.8%.

This is a two-edged sword: there is a shortage of hotels to service any significant tourism offer and there are insufficient tourist numbers to stimulate demand for new hotel investments.

Having said that, 80% of all hotel accommodation is business driven, rather than tourism driven and with the district having a low business stock this compounds the development of a strong serviced accommodation (hotel) base.

The importance of this information is the effect each visitor has on the local economy. Each day visitor spends around £30 whilst an overnight stay influences the economy by about 5 times that amount.



Place

The work on Invest in Bassetlaw from a place shaping perspective has clearly picked up three strong themes:

Storyscape, Breathing Space and Connected Value

Firstly it recognises that Bassetlaw is a land of stories and history through a Storyscape theme, secondly the Breathing Space theme is around our natural assets of countryside and villages, thirdly Connected Value identifies that the district is a place surrounded by plenty of other assets (Nottingham, Lincoln, Sheffield etc.) and it is easy to reach these other places from the district.

The work has also identified that Bassetlaw is not a recognised place but a public sector brand and that the strongest opportunity to promote the place is North Nottinghamshire which will be used as a re-enforcer to local attractions, for example Hodsock Priory, North Nottinghamshire.

All our tourism leaflets, brochures and publications, whether virtual or printed will have the visual language representing North Nottinghamshire to promote our new descriptive place positioning.

In forming an effective Tourism Strategy, the task is to make a coherent, single tourism offering which will make North Nottinghamshire a destination in its' own right rather than a place to pass through unnoticed.

The methodology to connect the disconnected is therefore to incorporate the three major themes to underpin the strategy.



BAGS
POTATOES
RED'S
WHITES
FREE
RANGE
EGGS

Storyscape

We are largely defined by our heritage and landscape and whilst there may be some more limited opportunities for 'new' tourism, we must focus on our primary assets.

Our heritage spans a long time-line and justifiably includes the Neolithic by the inclusion of Creswell Crags, which straddles two counties.

The timeline becomes dark until medieval times when the major stories around the Enclosure Acts (from 13th to 18th centuries) led to the creation of the hunting estates for the rich and landed gentry arriving at the term Dukeries being widely used at the time.

There is a rich vein of opportunity to tap into with this theme with the individual stories around:

- Welbeck
- Clumber
- Hodsock

At the time these were particularly richly intertwined with the ruling classes and include interesting back stories connected with the Progress of Henry VIII and King James I arrival from Scotland.

In terms of cause and effect this background and these monarchs also form the basis of the origins of religious non conformity arising from the dissolution of the monasteries and the establishment of the Church of England.

The dissenting separatist movements started during Henry VIII's reign and culminated in the Pilgrim Fathers flight from the district in 1607 as a result of James I oppressive religious policies.

Indeed the whole troubled tale of the Stuart dynasty ultimately led to the English Civil wars later in the 17th century.

Our Storyscape strategy must include the Pilgrim Fathers as a major theme due to the unique historical fact the Pilgrim Fathers originated here.



Pilgrim Fathers Origins

Subject to consultation and further research, below is indicative of the approach we will take to ensure that Pilgrim Fathers is embedded in this and future Visitor Economy strategies:

1. **Pilgrim Fathers profile** will be raised, particularly to take account of the 400th anniversary of the landing at Plimouth Rock in 1620 by the Mayflower

2. **We will liaise with other areas to develop a 'national' Pilgrim Fathers 2020 offer.**

3. **We need to clearly understand the impact which 2020 may bring to the district and it is intended to gather evidence from US visitors to understand their travel intentions in the run-up to 2020 and elicit what attraction or event would stimulate more visitors.** This survey work will further refine the project details as currently listed below.

4. **We will, working with partners, lead on an ambitious bid to HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) a project which will make the Pilgrim Fathers Origins a major part of these 2020, 400 year anniversary celebrations.** This project will (subject to consultation and further research):

a. **Seek to establish the viability of a Visitor Centre in Scrooby.** Until the research/survey work (mentioned in item 3 above) is completed it is highly unlikely that a physical visitor centre would be economically viable, unless delivered by a third party. We do not seek to underwrite such a venture and independent research has recently arrived at a potential figure of 2,500 visitors per annum, which would not support economic viability.

b. **Establish a physical legacy presence in the village by the commissioning of a statue of William Brewster**

c. **Establish a strong learning and outreach programme, based in Retford (museum) to promote the story to local people, community and history groups and, crucially, to schools, since our evidence base suggests that the story is unknown to people under the age of 40.** This outreach, whilst being based in Retford will also see a strong

presence in the museum of the PF story as the WW1 commemoration ends and 2020 anniversary gains prominence. This will utilise other facilities as an outreach destination and connect to other initiatives such as William Bradford heritage at Austerfield.

d. **We will develop a new Interactional Pilgrim Fathers web site which will use social media inputs, develop ancestry searches, have a blog for research purposes, have transactional and donation facilities.**

e. **Additionally, we will seek to recreate the weekly journey which the early Separatists took from Scrooby to Babworth (to hear the preaching's of Richard Clyfton) by creating a safe and storied route along the old North Road.** Whilst it is acknowledged that this is a seven mile linear route, opportunities to create more circular walking, riding and cycle routes will be explored to connect with other existing and potential routes, such as Chesterfield Canal towpath plus linkages at each end to go from Scrooby to Bawtry and Babworth to Retford. This will be achieved by partnership working with other bodies such as Sustrans, Ramblers Association & Canal and River Trust.

f. **The existing Pilgrim Fathers trail will be further developed in terms of the information provided and its' content delivery.** The project will explore augmented reality projections and as a minimum, have a QR code which will show a short 2 minute re-enactment via a smart phone. The project will ensure that there is a wireless hotspot at the interpretation panel to take advantage of the technology, showcase the information to the non-technical and as a bi-product provide internet access to remote rural communities.

g. **To ensure that this short re-enactment has impact, we will commission a short film, professionally produced for this and a longer 15-20 minute video shown at a Visitor Centre and museum.** The two minute version will be available on the web-site, at interpretation panels in key locations in the district (e.g. town halls).

Festival of Stories

In order for the area to demonstrate its potential and uplift the economic profile, a coherent place shaping strategy needs to be adopted. The Invest in North Nottinghamshire project is literally about putting the area on the map. Bassetlaw is relatively unknown and has no identity. Using the expertise of specialist place marketing consultants we have created a place brand for the area including a written proposition, key messages, and new visual identity.

1. There are storytelling opportunities relating to the major brand of Robin Hood and there is an annual Robin Hood festival held in Edwinstowe in August each year.

We will work with the organisers of this event to develop a story-telling festival in the district to encourage creative arts and provide a tourism destination around Robin Hood as a theme.

2. As a future potential development we will add in our local back stories into the festival, for example the stories behind Welbeck Abbey and Hodsock Priory (gambling debts), Tommy Simpson and the Great North Road.
3. This festival will aim to be a mixture of live events in our parks (Kings Park, the Canch) on our streets and Market Squares and in local venues such as the Acorn Theatre.
4. This festival will be delivered as more of a facilitative basis, rather than direct resources from the Council and we will explore other funding streams, such as Arts Council, to help deliver this.



NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE



Industrial Heritage

Bassetlaw, whilst being largely rural in nature (see Landscape below) does have some unique stories to tell about our industrial past. It seems obvious to make the leap to the coal mining industry but the unique opportunities are more entwined and connected to earlier industries, particularly associated with the Chesterfield Canal:

1. Chesterfield Canal. The majority of the navigable portion of the Chesterfield meanders its way through Bassetlaw, from west of Worksop to the Trent. This historic (1777) infrastructure has a story of its own but also presents a more leisure focused tourism offer for the now. We will seek to develop a trail with story boards (and QR codes) along the canal ensuring that footpaths and cycle ways are accessible. We will also seek to develop a new marina, which is strongly supported by evidence gathered in 2010 around the potential for an additional 150 canal berths. The canal also has the benefit of running directly through our town centres providing additional footfall for our market towns.
2. The Chesterfield canal was also instrumental in the development of 2 major sources of industrial heritage for Worksop in particular. Barley was extensively grown around the district due to favourable soil conditions and in 1160 records show 1 malt kiln. In 1636 there were 3, in 1860 there were 29, declining to 4 in 1950 to none in the present day. The straddle warehouse over the Chesterfield canal was specifically (and uniquely) built to facilitate the transport and loading/unloading of grain and malt. We will commemorate this important part of our industrial past by story boards and development of a virtual model town through the ages, which will be an integral part of Worksop Creative village Phase 2 development.
3. The second unique opportunity exists around the fact that liquorice production was a key industry for Worksop. In 1636 there were seven 'liquorish' gardens listed and noted for outstanding quality. Liquorice means 'sweet root' and was grown as a natural sweetener at the time and was widely used for that purpose until sugar cane from the West Indies started to arrive around 1750 and production fell into decline. The last recorded liquorice garden was dug up in 1832. We will re-establish a liquorice garden as part of the Creative Village Phase 2 proposal and hold a competition to develop a local liquorice-based foodstuff such as apple & liquorice pie, liquorice fudge etc. to start to put Worksop on the map by having an indigenous foodstuff.
4. Timber was also a main industry in and around Worksop with Windsor chairs and cricket bats being in prominence. We will seek to re-create –either as exhibition pieces, or demonstrated by a local business- this aspect of the industrial past.
5. We will continue to support and develop the existing heritage trails in the two towns.

We will also work with the 10 micro-breweries in the district to hold an annual local beer festival which will be augmented by street theatre production telling the story around our industrial past.



Landscape & Consultation

We will seek to enhance the natural assets which the district has in terms of our landscape theme.

Here lies a quandary for the district- peace and tranquillity are of major benefit to us but equally are a fragile nature which could be spoilt by a large number of visitors.

Our opportunity here, therefore needs to be carefully considered.

These assets can be summarised as being:

- Clumber Park
- Hodsock Priory (Snowdrops)
- Idle Valley Nature reserve
- Osberton Horse Trials
- Windmills
- Cycle paths
- Market towns

We will develop literature and web-site to package these assets to appeal to wildlife and nature lovers, walkers, cyclists, history buffs and seekers of tranquillity.

We will continue to work with our market towns, business communities and civic societies to improve the quality of the retail experience and visitor economy and will continue to invest and develop our markets and town centres.

The development of the Pilgrim Way- as indicated earlier will re-create the linear route from Scrooby to Babworth. To provide an infrastructure legacy and to promote more walking, cycling and horse riding, we will further explore the inclusion of circular routes to include and improve connections to Chesterfield Canal towpath, access to Clumber park, Creswell Crags country park and take advantage of sharing our countryside with residents and visitors.

Your views are important to us and we need your help in shaping our strategy.

You can do this by answering the follow questions in writing to:

Robert Wilkinson
Economic Development
Queens Buildings
Potter Street
Worksop S80 2AH

via email - robert.wilkinson@bassetlaw.gov.uk

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N6CR9DX>

Consultation Questions

1. Do you agree with the Councils vision as set out in the Strategy?
2. Do you agree with the strategic themes of the Strategy?
3. Do you agree with the objectives that underpin each strategic theme?
4. Do you think there should be additional objectives underpinning the strategy?
5. Are there any additional actions that should be considered?
6. Are there any other comments?



Contact us



01909 533 223



www.bassetlaw.gov.uk



economic.regeneration@bassetlaw.gov.uk



Text us on 07797 800 573



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Visit us at:

Retford One Stop Shop
17B The Square, Retford DN22 6DB

Worksop One Stop Shop
Queens Buildings, Potter Street, Worksop S80 2AH

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We can arrange for a copy of this document in large print, audiotape, Braille or for a Language Line interpreter to help you.



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