

Making Selby District a Great Place...

Visitor Economy Strategy : 2018 – 2022 and beyond



Visitor Economy Strategy : 2018 – 2022 and beyond

This document sets out the Visitor Economy Strategy for Selby District, as a key element of the District's Economic Development Framework. The visitor economy is a priority growth area in the Framework. This recognises the role that the town centres and the breadth of visitor assets have in making Selby a great place to live and work. Specifically, *we want to develop our visitor offer so that both residents and visitors alike can discover and celebrate our rich cultural heritage and unique locations.*¹

The Strategy has been prepared following an extensive review of the District's current visitor economy. This has included stakeholder workshops, a research questionnaire, one-to-one interviews with key tourism businesses and investigations in to comparable local authorities. The quotes included in the document have been taken from this consultation.



"There's lots of 'hidden gems but no-one knows about them"

Clear messages have emerged regarding the relative strengths and weaknesses of the current visitor economy, as highlighted in the sidebar. These form the key components of the Visitor Economy Action Plan.

A Strategy for Growth

The strategy is a first for Selby District and recognises that the visitor economy is currently an under-exploited sector within the Authority. It has been built around 4 key outcomes that will:

- Play a crucial role in the District's Economic Development Framework and boost the local economy
- Improve the lives and wellbeing of residents as well as improving the experience for visitors
- Directly addresses the ambitions of key visitor economy stakeholders
- Encourage and create community ambassadors and advocates for the District

The overriding aim of the strategy is to grow the sector by 20% by the end of 2022, having established a credible baseline in 2018. The targeted growth rate is estimated to generate between £4m and £12m of tourism expenditure by the end of 2022 for a cumulative investment of around £1million over 3 years.

Our District

STRENGTHS

- Selby Abbey
- Nature, Cycling and Walking
- International Appeal (US and China)
- Screen Yorkshire
- Rich Layers of History including Buildings, Battle Sites and Beer
- Canals and Shipbuilding Heritage
- Road and Rail Connections

WEAKNESSES

- Communication and Collaboration
- Market Towns' Visual Impact
- Marketing
- Accommodation Offer Gaps
- Lack of Coach Parking in Selby
- No Major Visitor Experience in District
- Diversity of Food and Drink Offering

OPPORTUNITIES

- Developing the Key Strengths
- Proximity to High Density Tourist Locations
- Business and Community Desire to Collaborate
- Improved Marketing - #shoplocal
- Themed Trails and Hidden Gems
- Industrial Tourism
- Social Media
- Events and Festivals
- Emerging Food and Drink Offers

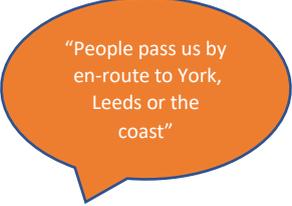
THREATS

- Perceived Lack of Political Will
- Requires SDC Resource to Follow Strategy Through
- Lack of Community Pride and Engagement in District
- Residents' Income Being Spent Outside of District
- Strength of Offerings from Surrounding Areas

¹ Selby District Economic Framework 2017-2022... and beyond – Priority 2

The strategy will place Selby District at the *Heart of Yorkshire* and will deliver a vibrant, engaging and varied visitor experience.

This will be achieved by leveraging the potential economic value of the millions of people who already visit the nearby cities of York, Leeds and Hull. Selby District's major assets are a diverse range of 'hidden gems', historical sites and distinctive areas of nature and wildlife will have huge appeal to a range of niche audiences.



"People pass us by en-route to York, Leeds or the coast"

The opportunity, and the essence of the strategy, is to entice people from adjacent areas through sharpening up the visitor economy 'product' and by significantly better promotion and marketing.

Emerging Themes

Clear themes emerged from the consultation. In terms of the strengths of the District; history and heritage, arts and culture and a diverse range of outdoor leisure activities came through very positively. Equally clear is the need to address aspects of the appearance of the District (particularly the market towns) and the narrow range of accommodation options. All these main themes feature strongly in the accompanying Action Plan.

Delivery Through 3 Distinct Phases

The Strategy will be delivered in a phased approach guided by a detailed Action Plan, to achieve maximum success. These phases are:

Organise – Creating the foundations

Given the comparatively under-resourced support for the sector, there needs to be attention to a number of fundamental, basic visitor economy practices to improve the infrastructure from which tourism businesses can prosper and grow.

This needs to be achieved in the first year of the Strategy, 2018/19, to enable support for some timely opportunities within the District. The biggest and first of these is the 950th anniversary of Selby Abbey in 2019. The anniversary should galvanise support for this major asset and inspire enhancing the experience for those visiting the District's most popular visitor attraction. Developing the food and drink/hospitality sectors is also an important focus of activity in this phase to meet the challenge of then extending visitor dwell-time in the District.

Specific deliverables from this phase of activity will include:

- Identifying and investing in the appropriate resources to help deliver the strategy, including the establishment of a Tourism Advisory Board for the District, to ensure tourism businesses have a clear role in future development
- Moving swiftly to support a plan to maximise the Selby Abbey 950th anniversary opportunity – ensuring that this iconic visitor attraction is leveraged as the central focal point, with associated fringe events throughout the District
- Creating a range of marketing material and initiatives to better promote and 'sweat' existing assets, with a clear plan of promotion into neighbouring cities and towards the American and Chinese tourism markets



"We need to put the pride back in to Selby District"

- Exploring the opportunity of the Tour De Yorkshire and UCI World Cycling Championships for the area, recognising the international dimension for promoting the District
- Building relationships with adjacent tourism organisations (e.g. Visit Leeds, Visit York) and national agencies that can support the strategy, through wider communications and collaborative campaigns
- Supporting the Church Fenton Yorkshire Studio to develop a tourism offer based around film
- Focus on exploiting current strong assets such as: heritage, outdoor activity and wildlife and churches, to deliver quick wins for the benefit and enjoyment of both residents and visitors alike

Develop – Delivering a better visitor economy product

Once there is a stronger visitor economy platform, attention will then focus on a number of clear development projects that will substantially improve the visitor economy offering. These will need planning and funding, exploring all the opportunities provided by Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund. It is anticipated this may take up to two additional years to complete.



Specific deliverables will include:

- Fulfilling a District-wide, major celebration of the Selby Abbey anniversary in 2019 and ensuring there is a legacy
- Concentrating work around town centre regeneration and appearance
- Considering a 'business improvement district' model alongside other market town development initiatives
- Assessing the opportunity for additional hotel accommodation
- Building the VE brand image based on the '*Heart of Yorkshire*' concept
- Further support for the development of the 'food and drink' offer in the District

"Something is changing in Selby, I can feel it"

Accelerate – Building pace and ambition

Following the progress of the Strategy's development phase, the emphasis will then shift to a more confident marketing drive, together with the delivery of longer-term initiatives. The anticipated growth in the visitor economy will, therefore, accelerate through 2021/22.

Feasibility projects and potential deliverables will include:

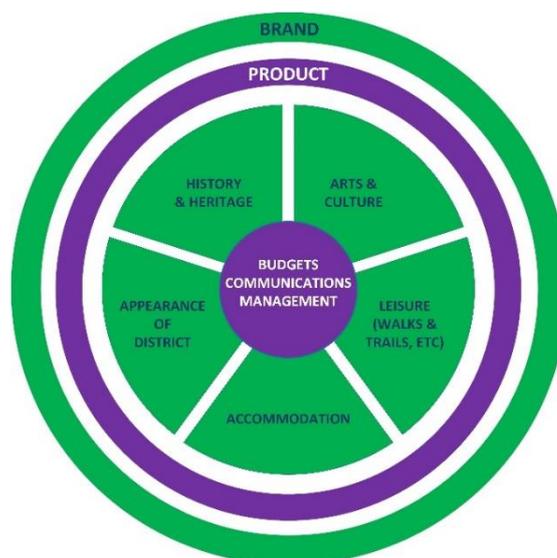
- Examining the possibility of developing Abbots Staithe as a cultural centre
- Supporting projects that reflect the growing visitor economy ambition of the District e.g. brewery and shipbuilding museum development, heritage conservation
- Creating bigger, more ambitious events and festivals (such as beer, canal)
- Building international links e.g. with Tadcaster and Selby's twinned towns

"I like living in Selby District"

Product and Brand

To maximise success, the various themes and their associated attractions will be developed within the context of a unified 'product' which, in turn, will sit within a clearly defined and identifiable Selby District 'brand'.

Recognising the progress of the place branding work already undertaken for the business proposition, the strategy will require the promotion of Selby as a 'district', as opposed to the existing, three separate market towns. The strategy could, therefore, link with the theme 'At the Heart of Yorkshire'. This product and branding work will be a significant work-stream in the development phase of the strategy.



Planning from a Position of Knowledge

1.5mn Domestic Visitors (1.4mn day trippers) ¹

- Majority for leisure or visiting friends/relatives
- Visitor spend £40m pa (c.£27 visitor/trip)

Available Accommodation

- 52 properties (603 rooms and 1,854 bed spaces) ¹
- Avg. occupancy c.70% last 12 months. Avg. stay 3.25 nights ²

Visitor Profile

- 56% of tourist customers from outside area, 44% residents of District
- 66% of visitors travelling with children (under 16), average party 5 people
- Majority of visitors aged between 35 and 65 years

1 – Visit England, 2015 (Note: accuracy of data ±45%)

2 – Make It York Survey, 2017

The strategy has been built from extensive consultations and from using all relevant, available visitor economy information.

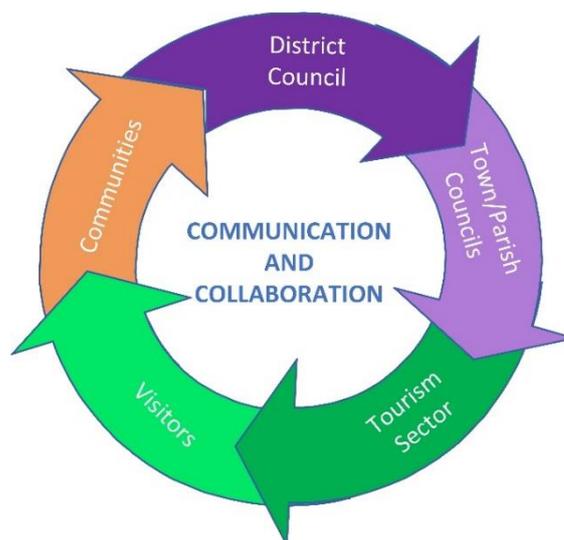
However, an imperative for the successful delivery of the strategy will be to establish a credible baseline from which future visitor economy performance can be measured and judged. Current information on key metrics such as visitor numbers and spend per visitor is very limited and unreliable. Visit England data from 2015 suggests that the visitor economy in Selby District was worth around £40m, largely resulting from day trippers. However, the margin of error on the modelled data is +/- 45%. Local information plays a key role in sharpening both local and national understanding of the impact of the visitor economy against consistent national measures.

More detailed, reliable and timely data gathering processes will be established and maintained as part of the strategy to ensure the visitor economy can be effectively delivered and monitored.

Ongoing Management & Communications

Underpinning all of the above will be the need for pro-active, ongoing management of the Visitor Economy Strategy, coupled with clear communications between the District and Town Councils, individual tourism businesses, resident communities and, of course, to potential tourists.

A key element will be the establishment of an active Tourism Advisory Board, with members drawn from across the tourism sector. The Advisory Board will be responsible for guiding, evolving and supporting the Strategy with active working groups on specific projects.



Supporting Documents

The following documentation has been prepared to support the Strategy:

[Visitor Economy Action Plan](#) – a detailed schedule of all projects and initiatives

[High Level Budget Forecast](#) – itemised by individual project and initiative

[Stakeholder Workshops](#) – a summary of the key areas of discussion and output from the workshops

[Questionnaires](#) – an analysis of the results from the responses to the questionnaire

[One-to-One Interviews](#) – a summary of the findings from the interviews