

Chesterfield Visitor Economy Strategy 2021 - 2026 Draft



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1. Introduction

This Visitor Economy Strategy (VES) is a five-year strategy that focuses Chesterfield Borough Council's approach to accelerating the growth of our visitor economy, the allocation of our resources to support this growth, and how we will work in a co-ordinated way with our sector partners. Its focus is on where we can make a real difference in developing our visitor economy; capitalising on related regeneration initiatives that we and others are involved in, that can attract visitors to Chesterfield.

This plan has been developed during the Covid-19 pandemic which has impacted hugely on our visitor, hospitality, and retail sector. Our immediate focus is about stimulating the short-term recovery of these sectors. However, this is not a recovery plan – it is more than that. It is about developing our visitor economy to be more substantial, and to play a stronger role in the development and diversification of the Chesterfield economy.

Chesterfield has many exciting opportunities that this strategy will build on:

- The Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield (RHOC) project to re-develop our outdoor market, Market Place and New Square;
- Proposed transformational investment in the Stephenson Memorial Hall cultural venue (including the Pomegranate Theatre);
- Major public realm improvements planned as part of the Connecting Chesterfield project;
- The development of PEAK Resort as a nationally significant visitor destination;
- The plans for Chesterfield Canal, which will in time, bring opportunities for increased visitor activity along the canal corridor out to Staveley;
- Our proximity to the popular Peak District, providing us with market opportunities to capitalise on the post-COVID staycation boom;
- In the longer term, HS2 will increase our accessibility by rail and provide the stimulus for the development of the Station Masterplan;
- National changes in consumer behaviour including the rise in domestic (and second) holidays and a greater awareness of the environmental implications of leisure trips and holidays can be of benefit to Chesterfield.

However, as a destination, we face challenges that we will need to tackle through this strategy and beyond:

- Consumer research highlights that we are not strongly perceived as a visitor destination;
- While the Crooked Spire Church is well known, the visitor experience that it offers is limited;
- We have no flagship attractors;
- While we have a developing programme of speciality and festival markets and cultural events, the opportunity exists for them to reach their full potential in terms of attracting visitors to the town;
- There are areas of delivery that could be strengthened, including the key destination marketing role.

This strategy will strengthen Chesterfield as a visitor destination by focussing on seven main priorities:

- Quality place making – to strengthen Chesterfield as a great place to visit, explore and spend time in.
- An enhanced Crooked Spire Experience - to build a stronger USP for the town and increase visitor dwell times.
- The development of PEAK Resort – as a major new driver of visitor demand in the borough.
- Speciality & Festival Markets and Events – a year-round programme of markets and events to capitalise on our planned investment in the Market Place and New Square.
- A Cultural and Heritage Destination – developing our cultural and heritage assets to attract visitors and increase dwell time through:
 - The development of the Stephenson Memorial Hall cultural venue;
 - The development of a distinctive series of artworks and architectural features ‘inspired’ by the Crooked Spire Church;
 - A year-round programme of cultural festivals that will make full use of the town’s theatres, Stephenson Memorial Hall, outdoor events spaces and the Crooked Spire Church;
 - The roll out of an interpretation plan to bring Chesterfield’s heritage stories to life.
- Hotel development – seeking to secure new hotel development to increase Chesterfield’s capacity to attract short break and business visitors.
- A ‘Chesterfield Inspired’ marketing approach– to raise awareness of Chesterfield as a place to visit, targeting our most important markets.

2. The Current Situation

2.1 The Importance of the Visitor Economy to Chesterfield

The visitor economy generated an estimated £203 million of direct and indirect expenditure into the Chesterfield economy in 2019. This supported a total of 2,347 Full time Job Equivalents (FTEs).

The Economic Impact of the Visitor Economy to Chesterfield – 2019				
	Visits ('000)	Visitor Days ('000)	Spend ¹ (£m)	% Total Spend
Overnight Visitors				
Serviced	152.8	313.7	36.92	18.2%
Non-serviced	5.6	38.8	2.17	1.1%
Staying with friends and relatives (SFR)	179.1	425.7	21.86	10.8%
Total	337.5	778.2	60.95	30.0%
Day Visitors	3,659	3,659	142.32	70.0%
All Visitors	3,996	4,437	203.28	

Notes: 1. Direct and indirect expenditure.

Source: STEAM

This expenditure spreads throughout our local economy: from direct spending on retail, entertainment and hospitality, through supply chain expenditure, and via local spending of the wages of those employed in the sector. The overall size of the local economy benefits and grows as a result.

The visitor economy also:

- Supports a range of jobs with different skills and entry requirements;
- Enhances our image and profile – not just as a place to visit but also as a place to work, do business, invest and move to;
- Helps to develop a sense of place and community pride to celebrate what is great about Chesterfield;
- Supports a wide range of facilities that enhance the quality of life for our residents including our market and shops, restaurants, theatres, attractions, recreation opportunities, and events and festivals;
- Increases the retention of residents' expenditure in Chesterfield through a strengthened destination offer.

2.2 Our Visitor Offer

The core elements of our visitor offer are:

- The Crooked Spire Church, as an iconic landmark that attracts around 50,000 visitors per year;
- Chesterfield Market, which attracts a local visitor market and coach trips;
- An expanding programme of speciality and festival markets, including the Flea, Artisan, Autojumble, 1940s, Medieval and Christmas markets;
- Chesterfield Museum, which welcomed almost 24,000, primarily local, visitors in 2019;
- The Pomegranate and Winding Wheel theatres, which draw regional audiences for some productions;
- A programme of cultural and sporting events and festivals (including National League football at the Technique Stadium, Chesterfield Half Marathon and the Chesterfield Canal Festival at Staveley Town Basin);
- A compact and attractive town centre that offers a good choice of independent and branded shops;
- Beyond the town centre:
 - Chesterfield Canal, which attracts some visitors for cycling, canoeing, paddle boarding, angling and the summer boat trips that run from Tapton Lock and Hollingwood Hub;
 - Barrow Hill Roundhouse, which attracts around 30,000 annual visitors, including some from further afield;
 - The Trans Pennine Trail and other local cycling networks.
- Beyond the Borough, the Peak District, Chatsworth, Bolsover Castle, Hardwick Hall and Sheffield as easy to reach places to visit;
- Seven hotels in the Borough, with just under 1,000 bedspaces;
- A further 44 small, mainly non-serviced accommodation businesses offering an additional 450 bedspaces;
- A number of hotels in the immediate vicinity that also serve the town.

2.3 Future Developments

Chesterfield's visitor economy is set to see a significant boost from a number of planned and proposed developments in the town centre and wider Borough over the next few years:

- **Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield (RHOC)** is a project to transform Chesterfield Market, Market Place and New Square to provide a reimagined market experience, enhanced public realm and new event spaces. The first phase has achieved £3.25m funding.
- **Connecting Chesterfield** is a £25m Levelling Up Fund project that involves the refurbishment and remodelling of the Stephenson Memorial Hall as a performing/visual arts and heritage venue, and a programme of public realm enhancements that will connect the Hall through to the Market Place and enhance the setting of the Crooked Spire Church.

- **PEAK Resort** at Unstone to the north of the town will be a major leisure, education, wellness and entertainment resort set in 300 acres of fully reclaimed and re-naturalised parkland. It will offer a wide range of adventure attractions; wellness facilities; hotels and other accommodation; and restaurants, cafes and bars. The Summit@PEAK adventure park is now on site as the first phase of the project, due to open in 2023.

Other proposals include: the **Basin Square** development as part of the Chesterfield Waterside regeneration scheme, which includes a new hotel, restaurants and bars, offices and residential apartments around a revitalised canal basin; a proposed 133-bedroom hotel at **Basil Close**, on the edge of the town centre; the potential development of the **Pavements Shopping Centre** following its acquisition; the **Staveley Town Deal** which presents opportunities to enhance the visitor offer in the east of the borough through investment in the **Chesterfield Canal**, including addressing gaps in navigation plus new facilities at **Staveley Basin**, improvements to **Staveley Town Centre**, and the development of a conference and events facility at **Staveley Hall**; and the new railway station at **Barrow Hill**, improving access to the Roundhouse amongst other benefits.

In the longer-term the masterplan for the **Chesterfield HS2 Station** will deliver a high-quality urban realm, including a 'feature' bridge to provide an enhanced pedestrian link from the station to the town centre.

2.4 Our Visitor Markets

Our visitors come in different guises. They could be coming because they have work, business or a meeting in Chesterfield; a coach trip coming for our market; a group coming for a wedding; a couple staying to visit the Peak District; someone visiting for a shopping trip, an evening at the theatre or for a night out with friends.

In volume terms, day visitors currently account for almost 92% of the Borough's visitors. In value terms, day visitors account for 70% of total visitor expenditure, and overnight visitors 30% of the total. Overnight visitors staying in paid accommodation account for 4% of visitors and 19% of visitor spending, with the balance comprising people staying with friends and relatives.

The following table provides a conceptual framework of our main visitor markets. It highlights, out of five:

- The current importance of each market, based on a combination of spending and volume: 1 is currently an unimportant market, 5 a very important one.
- Our ability to influence each market through destination marketing: 1 means low influenceability and 5 high influenceability.
- Growth Potential in the next five years: 1 is limited potential, and 5 very strong.

Market	Description / Potential Motivators	Current importance	Ability to Influence	Growth Potential
Day Visitors				
Local day visitors	People travelling from home from approximately half an hour to three quarters of an hour away. Motivations will vary but will tend to more 'functional' activities like shopping, a night or meal out, a cinema trip, a visit to the museum, recreational activities, and perhaps attendance at an event.	5	4	2
Regional Day visitors	People travelling from further afield to spend time in Chesterfield. Motivations are likely to be less functional and focused more on the out-of-the-ordinary – e.g. theatre, events, speciality markets, the Crooked Spire.	3	4	3
Day and evening visitors staying in the Peak District and at PEAK Resort	People staying in the Peak District for a holiday/short break and visiting Chesterfield during the day or in the evening. Visitors staying at PEAK Resort will, in time, represent a potential additional audience that can be attracted into the town centre	2	4	3
Pre and post Peak District and PEAK Resort day and evening visitors	People passing through Chesterfield en-route to the Peak District or Chatsworth and, in time, PEAK Resort, or calling into the town en-route home after a day out in the Peak District or at PEAK Resort.	1	2	3
Coach groups	An existing market for Chesterfield that has declined in recent years but can be encouraged again as the town's visitor offer develops. This is a market that can be readily reached through direct marketing activity.	1	5	3
Day conferences and meetings	Delegates coming for a small meeting or conference. Communication links close to the M1 are a strength but not unique. Conference business is likely to go direct to a venue and it will be a difficult market for us to influence.	1	2	2
Staying Visitors				
Business	Business visitors are the key midweek market for Chesterfield hotels. This is a non-discretionary market and therefore difficult for us to influence. Its growth potential will be dependent on broader economic growth in Chesterfield.	4	1	2
Contractors	Contractors working on development projects in the area are a key midweek market for Chesterfield's value for money hotels. This is another non-discretionary market that we cannot really influence.	4	1	2

Market	Description / Potential Motivators	Current importance	Ability to Influence	Growth Potential
Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)	People visiting their friends and relatives in the Borough is both a day and staying market. Staying VFR visitors are most likely to stay in the homes of their friends and relatives, but some will use commercial accommodation. This is generally a non-discretionary market but can be influenced to undertake activity (and spend) locally via communication with local residents.	4	3	2
Residential conferences and meetings	The borough's hotels attract very little residential conference business. This is a market that will book directly with the hotels or via agents.	1	1	1
Occasion	People attending weddings and other family occasions (birthdays, anniversaries etc). This is both a day and staying market. It is important for Chesterfield's hotels at weekends, and the core market for venue hotels. Influenceability is generally venue (rather destination) specific.	3	1	1
Short breaks	Chesterfield hotels are attracting some weekend and summer midweek short break business – primarily as a base for the Peak District and Chatsworth. Proximity, the lack of hotel stock in the Peak District, the more affordable prices of Chesterfield hotels, flexibility in terms of duration of stay, and branded hotel provision are all factors influencing the choice of Chesterfield hotels. This market is potentially influenceable but is more likely to find Chesterfield hotels through OTAs (Online Travel Agencies) and hotel brands. Branded hotels will not take part in destination marketing. Weekend demand is currently constrained by a lack of hotel availability on Friday and Saturday nights. Growth potential is largely dependent on securing more hotel stock.	2	2	3
Post Night Out Stays	Chesterfield town centre hotels are currently attracting some weekend overnight business after nights out in Chesterfield. This group will be difficult to influence. Growth potential is likely to be linked to population growth, the development of the town centre night-time economy, and further town centre hotel development.	2	1	2

3. Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

The following section provides a summary of our key strengths, challenges and opportunities as a visitor destination.

3.1 Strengths

- Accessibility and catchment population - with 23 million people living within a two-hour drive of the borough, and good transport access, particularly via the M1 and mainline train services. The A619, running through Chesterfield, is a key access route into the Peak District from the east and M1 corridor.
- Surrounding destinations and attractions – the Peak District and its key attractions / sub-destinations like Chatsworth, Matlock Bath and Bakewell (all within 12miles) but also Hardwick Hall, Bolsover Castle and Sheffield (~11miles away).
- Town centre – Chesterfield town centre is compact and easy to navigate. Architecturally it is attractive with its medieval street pattern and highly recognisable black and white Tudor Revival buildings and distinctive quarters (like the Shambles). The town centre also has good car and coach parking.
- Chesterfield Market – although the number of market stalls has reduced in recent years, Chesterfield Market is a key asset and opportunity, with its exceptional spaces, heritage and profile. The success of niche markets, including the flea and artisan markets, provide evidence of the opportunity.
- Iconic Church - the Crooked Spire Church is a distinctive and iconic feature for Chesterfield, and well known. However, the visitor offer could be strengthened.
- Hotels – Chesterfield’s hotel offer is modern, of a good standard, and has a number of key UK value hotel brands that have strong customer bases and loyalty.

3.2 Challenges

- No major attractions – we lack any major attractions that have a high profile and volume of visits. The Crooked Spire Church is an iconic landmark but is a small to medium attraction with a primarily local and sub-regional appeal. Other attractions in the Borough have a similar draw.
- Limited critical mass of product – we do not have a significant concentration of product either thematically (e.g., heritage or culture) or geographically. This impacts on our profile as a visitor destination and the dwell time for a visitor which, at the moment, is relatively limited.
- Heritage – Chesterfield has a number of interesting heritage stories and buildings (Chesterfield’s Roman and Medieval history/street pattern, the Markets, the Peacock centre, George

Stephenson, the Civic leaders and key employers e.g. Robinson's/Markhams', Revolution House and the area's wider industrial heritage etc.) that can add interest to a visit. However, none are sufficiently compelling to act as a major visitor draw.

- Limited hotel capacity and accommodation choice – most of the borough's hotels are consistently fully booked on Friday and Saturday nights for a large part of the year. This limits opportunities to promote Chesterfield as a weekend break base.
- Town Centre – while a strength there are some operational and public realm issues which need to be addressed to improve the visitor experience. The railway gateway into the town centre is not particularly welcoming from a visitor perspective (but this will be addressed through the Station Masterplan). Road signing for visitors (particularly white on brown signing to the town centre) and interpretation and wayfinding could be strengthened.
- Two-dimensional town centre offer – the town centre offer falls into two distinct elements. Firstly, a daytime retail offer (primarily comparison / functional shopping) and, secondly, a night-time offer of bars and clubs. With the exception of the theatres, there is not a blended or graduated offer than runs from daytime, through early evening, evening, to night-time. The early evening economy is a weakness at present.
- Limited family offer – the visitor offer for families, particularly in the town centre, is limited. Across the borough there is some family offer (e.g., Barrow Hill Roundhouse, Queen's Park and recreational opportunities) but nothing significant.
- Destination marketing – destination marketing is delivered through three different organisations but no one organisation is 'owning' the marketing role. As a consequence, it is tending to be reactive and slightly fractured.
- Delivery – A number of our functions are visitor facing – e.g., theatres, market, events, museum but these are typically operationally driven. Visitors may be part of their market but are generally a subsidiary element. There is potential to further integrate and strengthen internal working structures in support of the visitor economy.

3.3 Opportunities for Market Growth

The research and analysis that has been completed to inform the Visitor Economy Strategy shows significant potential for growth in Chesterfield's visitor economy over the next 5 years as a result of:

- The potential to increase penetration in Chesterfield's existing markets – particularly day visitors from home and visitors to the Peak District;
- The plans that are being actively progressed to revitalise Chesterfield town centre, which will make it a more attractive place to visit;
- The development of PEAK Resort – and the markets and opportunities it will create;

- The current staycation boom as the country emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consumer research indicates that the visitor markets which offer the strongest growth potential for Chesterfield are as follows:

- Day visitors (local/regional);
- Short break visitors (using Chesterfield as a base);
- Day and evening visitors staying in the Peak District
- Day and evening visitors staying at PEAK Resort
- Pre and post Peak District and PEAK Resort day and evening visitors;
- Coach groups
- Visitors to friends and relatives

3.4 Required Improvements

The key requirements for achieving growth in these visitor markets are:

- **Improving the daytime visitor offer of the town centre.** Chesterfield's key visitor assets are in the town centre and it is a strategic aim to increase town centre footfall in order to support the viability of retail, leisure and hospitality businesses. Dwell time is relatively limited (with a potential trip lasting 2 hours to half a day) and the visitor offer could be considered weak compared to potential competitors. Strengthening the daytime offer is key to exploiting most of the market opportunities.
- **Developing the town centre evening offer.** The evening economy (broadly the 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. period) offer is relatively weak at present. Improving and diversifying the offer in terms of restaurants, bars, cultural and entertainment venues, evening markets and events will create footfall and atmosphere in the town centre, providing things for visitors to do. A stronger early evening offer will increase dwell time and spend for day visitors and be integral to attracting Peak District visitors (day and staying – using Chesterfield as a base) and, in future, PEAK Resort visitors (day and staying).
- **Hotel development.** Developing further hotel accommodation is needed if Chesterfield is to attract more staying visitors and establish itself as a base for the Peak District and, potentially, PEAK Resort. The opportunity and market interest for the town centre is in terms of branded value hotels, which will be beneficial in terms of generating evening footfall and spend.
- **Targeted Marketing.** Proactive marketing campaigns aimed at the key target visitor markets that we can reach through destination marketing will be key to raising awareness of Chesterfield as a visitor destination as its offer improves and develops.

The table below summarises the relative importance of these requirements for each of the target visitor markets for Chesterfield. *** = very important ** = quite important * = of some importance

Target Market	Requirement			
	Hotel development	Town centre daytime offer	Town centre evening offer	Targeted Marketing
Day visitors (local / regional)	n/a	***	*	***
Short Break (using Chesterfield as a base)	***	**	***	**
Day visitors staying in the Peak District	n/a	***	**	***
Day visitors staying at PEAK Resort	n/a	*	***	***
Pre and post Peak District and PEAK Resort day/ evening visitors	n/a	**	***	**
Coach groups	n/a	***	*	***
Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) (day and staying)	*	***	**	**

4. The Strategy

4.1 Strategic Approach and Guiding Principles

The purpose of the Visitor Economy Strategy is to attract more day and staying visitors to Chesterfield, generating additional visitor spend that will support existing employment and create new jobs in the local economy. It seeks to achieve this by capitalising on all the work we and others are progressing to make Chesterfield a great place to be; a place that people enjoy visiting and spending time in. As such, the Strategy is underpinned by a focus on quality place making, seeking to reinforce a distinctive Chesterfield identity (we are the location of the Crooked Spire Church) that differentiates us from other visitor destinations. Quality places will provide the setting for the further development of an experiential and leisure based offer that attracts new visitors to Chesterfield and encourages a high level of repeat visits. For example, in Chesterfield town centre, this will include the redevelopment of the outdoor market (a reimagined market experience), an enhanced events and festivals programme and a stronger food & drink offer.

The Staveley Town Deal presents opportunities to strengthen the visitor offer in the east of the borough (for example through investment in upgraded public realm in Staveley Town Centre and new facilities at the Staveley Basin on Chesterfield Canal), whilst PEAK Resort will be a major new driver of visitor demand once it is developed. One of Chesterfield's key attributes is its geographical location (accessible to a large catchment population and close to major attractions) and we will encourage more people to use Chesterfield as a base for visits to Derbyshire and the Peak District.

Our approach to developing the visitor economy is encapsulated in the following core proposition:

A lively market town with the iconic Crooked Spire Church, Chesterfield inspires day and staying visitors with its unique mix of independents, markets, events, festivals and borough-wide attractions, providing a great base from which to explore Derbyshire and the Peak District.

In pursuing our key priorities, we will be guided by the following principles:

- **Dynamic** – Within our overall strategic approach we will be dynamic, enabling us to react to funding, marketing, partnership and development opportunities as they arise.
- **Sustainable** – The Strategy will be progressed in a sustainable manner. In particular, Chesterfield has an opportunity to establish itself as a sustainable visitor hub through the provision of gateway facilities and low carbon transport for visitors to the Peak District and surrounding area. Chesterfield benefits from good national rail connectivity (including future provision of high-speed rail services), established public transport links to destinations such as Bakewell and Matlock, an expanding local cycle network and proposed cycle hub at the rail station.
- **Quality** – Our investment in place-making will utilise design and material of the highest quality, new and enhanced events will 'raise the bar' in terms of our ongoing offer to visitors.
- **Contemporary** – We want to celebrate and enhance our heritage and cultural assets whilst delivering a forward looking and modern programme of physical development, cultural programming and innovations in markets and events.

- **Balanced** – Whilst delivery of the strategy will have a particular focus on the town centre (reflecting the fact this is where the key visitor assets are located and also where the Council is best placed to make a difference), we will support sector partners in taking forward key opportunities across the borough, including PEAK Resort, Chesterfield Canal developments and projects in the Staveley Town Deal programme.

4.2 Aims

The aims of the Visitor Economy Strategy are as follows:

- **Aim 1:** To raise the profile of Chesterfield as a place to visit.
- **Aim 2:** To generate direct visitor spend which will create and support jobs in the local economy.
- **Aim 3:** To support and accelerate the revitalisation of the town centre and the wider borough.

4.3 Aspirations and Targets

Our aspiration is to see the visitor economy not only recover from the Covid-19 pandemic but also grow. Expectations are that a full recovery of the visitor economy will not take place until 2024. The following table summarises recovery expectations and our growth aspirations by the end of 2025 (see appendix 1 for more details).

	Recovery – end 2025	Growth Aspiration – end 2025	Growth	Difference in Growth (%)
Volume of trips				
Day visits (m)	3.91	4.63	0.72	18
Staying visits (m)	0.38	0.42	0.04	11
Spend				
Day visits (£m)	152	180	28	18
Staying visits (£m)	62	67	5	8

We will monitor our progress against these targets by continuing to commission an annual STEAM report. We will also establish an annual dataset that will be monitored and reported. Indicators could include:

- Monitoring hotel performance – and the impact of new hotel openings
- Attendance and letting levels at speciality and festival markets
- Attendances at a small number of key annual events
- Visits to key attractions such as the Stephenson Memorial Hall and the Crooked Spire
- Overall town centre footfall
- Marketing campaign analytics.

4.4 Strategic Priorities

The priorities that the Visitor Economy Strategy will specifically seek to address are as follows (to note these are of equal weighting):

- **Priority 1:** Strengthening the overall quality of place to make Chesterfield a great place to visit and spend time in.
- **Priority 2:** Developing the Crooked Spire Experience.
- **Priority 3:** Maximising the visitor potential of the PEAK Resort development.
- **Priority 4:** Developing a year-round programme of speciality & festival markets and events to fully capitalise on the planned investment in the Market Place and New Square.
- **Priority 5:** Enhancing Chesterfield's cultural and heritage offer through strengthening the role of Stephenson Memorial Hall as a cultural venue, an 'inspired' artworks and architecture programme; a year-round programme of cultural festivals; and heritage interpretation plan.
- **Priority 6:** Securing new hotel provision in Chesterfield.
- **Priority 7:** A 'Chesterfield Inspired' marketing approach to raise awareness of Chesterfield's developing visitor offer.

5. Strategic Priority 1: Quality Place Making

5.1 Rationale and Approach

The development of the visitor economy is underpinned by a focus on quality place making which seeks to create great places that people enjoy visiting and spending time in. Quality place making is also about building on and reinforcing local character to create a sense of place that is uniquely 'Chesterfield', something which differentiates us from other locations and which can't be replicated on-line. Quality places complement, and provide the setting for, a range of activities such as markets, events, food & drink, recreation etc that will help drive the growth of our visitor economy.

In Chesterfield town centre, improving the daytime and evening offers have been identified as key requirements for increasing visitor numbers, dwell times and spending in the town. This includes improving the quality of the public realm environment; better lighting to enhance evening visits; improved digital connectivity to facilitate digital exploration; better wayfinding to help visitors to find their way around the town; and encouraging a wider choice of independent shops, cafes and restaurants (there is also a need to ensure the availability of a suitably skilled workforce to support the growth of these businesses).

We are already progressing elements of this work, for example, through the delivery of a pedestrian friendly environment as part of the Northern Gateway scheme, which also provides outdoor space for new cafes and restaurants linked to the Elder Way leisure development. We have secured funding via the Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield scheme to undertake the redevelopment of the Outdoor Market and will be seeking to make a major investment in high-quality public realm across the town centre through the Connecting Chesterfield project.

In the east of the borough, funding from the Staveley Town Deal will facilitate a number of place based developments that will improve the local visitor offer. These include: upgraded public realm in Staveley town centre; the development of conference and events facilities at Staveley Hall; and further investment in the Chesterfield Canal navigation and new facilities at the Staveley Basin.

The Council provides a range of recreational and leisure facilities across the borough including the provision of three award winning destination parks (Queens Park, Holmebrook Valley Park and Poolsbrook Country Park). These (and other) facilities make an important contribution to the general amenity of the borough and we will seek to secure (either directly or in partnership with others) further quality of place improvements in future.

5.2 Action Areas

Action Area	Description
Chesterfield Town Centre Place Making	<p>We will progress a series of major public realm projects that will significantly enhance the experience of visiting and exploring Chesterfield town centre through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield project, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Redevelopment of the outdoor market; ○ New events spaces; ○ Public realm improvements around the edges of Market Place; ○ Wayfinding; • The Connecting Chesterfield project, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public realm improvements along Corporation Street, Spire Walk, Rykneld Square, Burlington Street, Packers Row and Market Place; ○ Digital infrastructure to support digital wayfinding, active travel, on-demand leisure and re-programmable flexible event spaces; ○ Lighting interventions. • Future delivery of the Chesterfield HS2 Station Masterplan
Staveley Town Deal Place Making	<p>Support partners to deliver schemes which improve the visitor offer as part of the Staveley Town Deal Programme, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staveley Town Centre public realm • Staveley Hall conference facilities • Chesterfield Canal navigation • Staveley Basin • Barrow Hill railway station
Borough Wide Place Making	<p>Quality place making initiatives on a borough wide basis to further enhance the visitor offer.</p>

Supporting the development of independent businesses	<p>We will support the development of independent town centre businesses through the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of a range of town centre premises; • The provision of business advice and support to local businesses, including the Digital High Street initiative; • Working with partners on local initiatives to address identified skills and staff shortages in the sector; • The roll out, in partnership with Destination Chesterfield of the ‘Love Chesterfield’ marketing campaign to encourage local people to use the town centre more; • The events that we hold, support and promote in the town centre to increase footfall.
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6. Strategic Priority 2: The Crooked Spire Experience

6.1 Rationale and Approach

The Crooked Spire Church is Chesterfield’s iconic landmark and strongest association for visitors. However, the visitor experience that it offers is currently lacking in terms of visitor welcome, interpretation of the church and spire, catering, retail and toilets. Much more could also be done to enhance the external visitor experience. There is a significant opportunity for the Council to further develop the Rykneld Square and Spire Walk elements of the Connecting Chesterfield project to work with the church to create an enhanced public space and visitor experience for the Crooked Spire Church. The church is also interested in improving the tower tours experience and making more use of the church as a space for suitable music, choral and cultural events.

6.2 Action Areas

Action Area	Description
Crooked Spire Experience Development Project	<p>We will progress a joint project with the church to look at options for upgrading the Crooked Spire visitor experience in and outside the church, including developing the churchyard and Rykneld Square as an enhanced public open space and setting for the church. We will also review the future role of the Visitor Information Centre to include consideration of it’s potential use as a welcome and interpretation centre for the church.</p>

7. Strategic Priority 3: PEAK Resort

7.1 Rationale and Approach

Supporting the development of the first phase of the PEAK Resort development is a key objective of our current Council Plan (2019-2023). The resort is set to be a major new driver of visitor demand in the borough, creating significant new employment and economic benefit. We have so far supported the project through planning consents and securing grant funding to deliver the new access roundabout to the site off the A61. We will continue to respond positively to further planning applications and will work in an innovative and creative manner to support the ongoing development of the resort, looking for ways to maximise the wider visitor economy benefits of the resort for Chesterfield.

7.2 Action Areas

Action Area	Description
Supporting PEAK Resort	The Borough Council will continue to support the development of PEAK Resort in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Giving positive consideration to planning applications as they come forward;• Working in innovative and creative partnerships to support the ongoing development of the resort.
Capitalising on PEAK Resort	We will seek to maximise the visitor economy benefits of PEAK Resort to Chesterfield through: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative marketing activity;• Joint events and festivals, incorporating PEAK Resort venues;• Undertaking a study of wider transport connectivity between PEAK Resort and Chesterfield town centre;• Supporting the development of hydrogen shuttle bus services between the resort and Chesterfield town centre and to and from the Peak District and attractions and places to visit in other parts of the borough and our surrounding area;• Supporting staff recruitment and training programmes for the resort, maximising opportunities for local residents;• Seeking to maximise local supply chain benefits.

8. Strategic Priority 4: Speciality & Festival Markets and Events

8.1 Rationale and Approach

Chesterfield's speciality markets (the Artisan Market, Autojumble, Flea Market and Record Fair) and festival markets (the Medieval Market and 1940s Market) are proving to be popular and attracting

new visitors to the town. The Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield and Connecting Chesterfield projects will transform the Market Place and New Square as a venue for markets and events. The Visitor Economy Strategy seeks to fully capitalise on this investment to develop Chesterfield’s reputation as a place to visit for interesting and different markets and market-focused festivals and events. We will also seek to attract additional events to take place in the borough.

8.2 Action Areas

Action Area	Description
Speciality & Festival Markets and Events	<p>We will establish a year-round programme of high-quality speciality and festival markets, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further enhancements to the Flea Market, Artisan Market, Autojumble, Record Fair, Medieval Market, 1940s Market and Christmas Market • The addition of new markets and events e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Food & Drink Festival ○ Antiques market ○ Craft market ○ Art market ○ Flower & plant market ○ Street food market ○ Vintage market ○ Book fair
Attracting Additional Events	Identify opportunities to attract additional events to the borough and work directly or in support of other organisations to secure their delivery.

9. Strategic Priority 5: Culture and Heritage

9.1 Rationale and Approach

A range of exciting projects are currently underway or in development to significantly transform Chesterfield’s cultural and heritage offer. Our plans for Stephenson Memorial Hall, as part of our Connecting Chesterfield project, will significantly enhance the Pomegranate Theatre as a performing arts venue and will upgrade Chesterfield Museum as a heritage asset. The Crooked Spire Church is looking to develop as a venue for music, choral and cultural events, while the reconfiguration of the Market Place and New Square will provide enhanced spaces for cultural events. There is scope to use public art to enhance Chesterfield as a place to visit and encourage exploration of the town. Chesterfield has interesting heritage stories (for example its medieval street pattern, development of the market, the industrial heritage of the borough etc) that can add interest to a visit and increase visitor dwell times. The Visitor Economy Strategy seeks to capitalise on these assets, investments and opportunities through:

- The progression of the plans for the restoration and development of Stephenson Memorial Hall;
- The development of a series of ‘inspired’ public artworks and architectural features that will reinforce a distinctive identity for Chesterfield;
- A year-round programme of cultural festivals, making full use of the theatres, Stephenson Memorial Hall, Crooked Spire Church and outdoor event spaces;
- A heritage interpretation plan for the town and wider borough.

9.2 Action Areas

Action Area	Description
Stephenson Memorial Hall	<p>A comprehensive transformation/restoration programme designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the capacity of the Pomegranate Theatre • Increase and improve the exhibition space for Chesterfield Museum • Better integrate the wider building, including shared foyer space, meeting rooms and an improved food and beverage offer
Inspired Artworks and Architecture Programme	<p>The development over time of a series of distinctive, high-quality, ‘inspired’ public artworks and architectural features that will complement the Crooked Spire Church as Chesterfield’s iconic landmark. It is envisaged that artworks will be commissioned as part of public realm projects, including as part of the Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield, Connecting Chesterfield and Station Masterplan projects. An Inspired Trail of artworks will also be considered. Encouragement will also be given to private sector development projects to incorporate ‘inspired’ architecture and artworks.</p>
Cultural Festivals Programme	<p>A year-round programme of cultural festivals e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music festivals – jazz, folk, choral, opera; • A comedy festival; • Literary, spoken word or poetry festivals; • A film festival; • An illumination festival.
Heritage Interpretation Plan	<p>The development and roll out of a heritage interpretation plan to bring Chesterfield’s heritage stories to life through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation panels; • Trails; • Itineraries; • Guided tours and talks; • Interpretative literature; • Digital content.

10. Strategic Priority 6: Hotel Development

10.1 Rationale and Approach

Increasing the number of overnight stays in the borough is a key objective in the current Council Plan (2019-2023). Additional hotel development is a key requirement for achieving this objective. Pre-COVID (2019) hotel performance in Chesterfield was strong, with frequent shortages of hotel capacity on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights. The lack of weekend hotel capacity is a clear constraint on our ability to develop as a weekend break base. More hotels will be needed as hotel demand returns to pre-COVID levels and starts to grow again. Discussions with hotel brand owners have identified a need for public funding investment support in order to achieve commercially viable hotel projects.

10.2 Action Areas

Action Area	Description
Chesterfield Hotel Investment Strategy	Prepare a strategy to guide any future investment by the Council, to include consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How many new hotels Chesterfield can support;• Where new hotels should be located to maximise their contribution to regeneration and visitor economy growth objectives e.g. development of evening economy in town centre;• The potential of council-owned sites for hotel development;• The best-fit hotel brands for Chesterfield;• The level and nature of any investment required by the Borough Council;• The potential returns to the Council.
Hotel Investment Programme	Potential investment in new hotel development guided by the Hotel Investment Strategy.

11. Strategic Priority 7: 'Chesterfield Inspired' Marketing

11.1 Rationale and Approach

Raising awareness of Chesterfield's developing programme of speciality and festival markets, the enhanced Crooked Spire Experience, the town's cultural festivals, heritage stories and improving quality of place will be key to attracting new visitors to Chesterfield and encouraging previous ones to return. A 'Chesterfield Inspired' marketing approach will aim to grow demand from our target visitor markets through a steady flow of information, messages, content and images about what is happening in the town and borough to inspire visits.

11.2 Action Areas

Action Area	Description
'Chesterfield Inspired' Marketing	<p>A continuous marketing campaign to raise awareness of what is happening in Chesterfield in terms of markets, events and the improving visitor offer, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the existing marketing approach to inform the development of a 'Chesterfield Inspired' brand; • New photography and videography; • A new / refreshed 'Chesterfield Inspired' website; • Continuous social media marketing and advertising; • PR activity targeted at local and regional media, travel writers and influencers; • Direct marketing to group travel organisers.
Market Intelligence	<p>A programme of research to inform decision making, improve our offer and monitor progress. This could include a combination of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic town centre visitor surveys to assess speciality and festival markets, the Crooked Spire, cultural festivals and Inspired Artwork and heritage interpretation; • Surveys to investigate the impact on visitor demand of the Staveley Town Deal projects and Chesterfield Canal development; • Non-visitor research to assess profile and attitude; • Occupancy research.

12. Delivery and Resources

12.1 Delivery Structures

Our support to the visitor economy is currently spread across a number of services, both internally within the Borough Council and externally. While we have an identified political and senior officer lead for the visitor economy, delivery is shared across a number of roles within the council – but is typically only a subsidiary part of an officer’s responsibility. This means while we are successfully delivering projects and services, there can be gaps in delivery and missed opportunities. In addition, the relatively small visitor economy private sector has a number of contact points which can lead to confusion.

This Strategy will build on existing success by further integrating and strengthening our working structures. The crucial role of destination marketing is currently delivered by the council, Destination Chesterfield and Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire. A review of marketing activity will be undertaken to determine whether rationalisation could bring a greater focus and introduce economies of scale.

Moving forward, we will continue to take the lead on the visitor economy and we will implement the following actions:

- Develop more integrated internal communication and management structures;
- Develop clearer operational ownership of the visitor economy, reflecting the political and Chief Officer leads;
- Review the role of external organisations across the board including consideration of a ‘single agency’ approach for destination marketing;
- Develop a more streamlined approach to business engagement with fewer points of contact for the private sector.

12.2 Resources

Chesterfield is being transformed, the current Northern Gateway scheme and the Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield project will greatly improve the centre of the town and its approaches. To this can be added the plans to redevelop the Stephenson Memorial Hall and the surroundings of the Church as part of the Connecting Chesterfield project and the Council’s direct ownership of the Pavements Shopping Centre. Significant investment is also set to take in the visitor offer in the east of the borough via the Staveley Town Deal.

The Visitor Economy Strategy will maximise the impact of these interventions through a smarter deployment of existing resources and consider growth opportunities. This will be achieved by:

- Continuing to win external funding to support our priorities;

- A fundamental review of how we spend our budgets, making them work harder for the visitor economy;
- Potential allocation of additional resources, from sources such as Business Rates retention;
- Working more closely with external providers to deliver events on a commercial/non-funded basis;
- Reviewing the role and effectiveness of the Visitor Information Service, identifying how best to deliver this function in the digital age;
- Looking to create additional posts to support the strategy's priorities; especially markets, events and festivals.

13. Action Plan

To be completed.

Appendix 1- Targets and Aspirations

This strategy sets out a small number of high priority interventions to develop the visitor economy in Chesterfield.

Forecasting how the future visitor economy will look is difficult at the moment as it emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic. This section outlines a potential recovery scenario and an aspirational growth scenario. These figures have been developed using the Chesterfield STEAM data of 2019 as a base and applying a combination of VisitBritain’s forecasts for 2021 and 2022 (for day visits) and the DCMS forecasts (undertaken by Tourism Economics in March 2021). Forecasts are to the end 2025 in line with the national approach.

The forecast and aspirational scenarios are based on the following assumptions:

- Full recovery will not take place till 2024
- Hotel development stimulated by the Visitor Economy Strategy will not come onstream until 2024, and other hotels may be brought forward by the increase in visitor demand
- The strategy will drive, on average, a 5% annual increase in the day visit market over and above the recovery trend
- Staying visits will be identical until 2024 when an additional 4%-5% increase (by volume) and 3%-4% increase (by value) will take place
- SUMMIT at PEAK will open in 2023 and generate 120,000 visits per annum from non-residents
- Gateway at PEAK will commence operations post 2025

The aspirational scenario shows that, by 2025, the Visitor Economy Strategy will generate:

- An additional 720,000 day visits a year
- An extra 44,000 staying visits
- An additional £30m of visitor expenditure
- 15% increase in employment supported by that expenditure

This is summarised in the following tables.

Visitor Volume							
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recovery scenario							
Day Visits (m)	3.65	1.31	2.12	2.86	3.58	3.76	3.91
Staying Trips (m)	0.337	0.152	0.182	0.280	0.344	0.364	0.380
Growth Scenario							
Day Visits (m)	3.65	1.31	2.12	2.97	3.86	4.25	4.63
Staying Trips (m)	0.337	0.152	0.182	0.280	0.344	0.396	0.426

Source: TEAM – based on STEAM data

Visitor Spend							
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recovery scenario							
Day Visits (£m)	142	51	82	111	139	146	152
Staying Trips (£m)	60	25	30	47	54	58	62
Growth Scenario							
Day Visits (£m)	142	51	82	115	150	165	180
Staying Trips (£m)	60	25	30	47	54	62	67

Source: TEAM – based on STEAM data

Jobs Supported (FTEs)							
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recovery scenario	2,347	880	1,298	1,836	2,235	2,364	2,474
Growth Scenario	2,347	880	1,298	1,883	2,361	2,628	2,851

Source: TEAM – based on STEAM data