

Local Visitor
Economy
Partnership



PUTTING HERTFORDSHIRE
IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Hertfordshire Destination Management Plan

2024 - 2029



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Welcome to Hertfordshire

As we prepare to look ahead with our brand-new Destination Management Plan, it is also important that we look back and take in how far Hertfordshire has come. Within ten short years, our visitor economy has gone from strength to strength; from having no destination management organisation, to becoming one of England’s leading DMOs, and one of the first to receive Local Visitor Economy Partnership status.

All of this has been made possible through our collaboration, and the work Visit Herts has done to bring our many exceptional tourism businesses and local authority partners together. Visit Herts’ leadership, ability to unite, and efforts to create a unified voice for our destination will be integral to the success of this DMP.

Together with key stakeholders, Visit Herts will use this plan to champion the growth of Hertfordshire and help our businesses to reach further. As Hertfordshire continues to lead the way with its excellent screen tourism offer, the DMP will capitalise on an increasing global interest in screen, along with our many other assets like heritage and proximity to London, ultimately placing Hertfordshire in the spotlight as one of the leading destinations in the country.

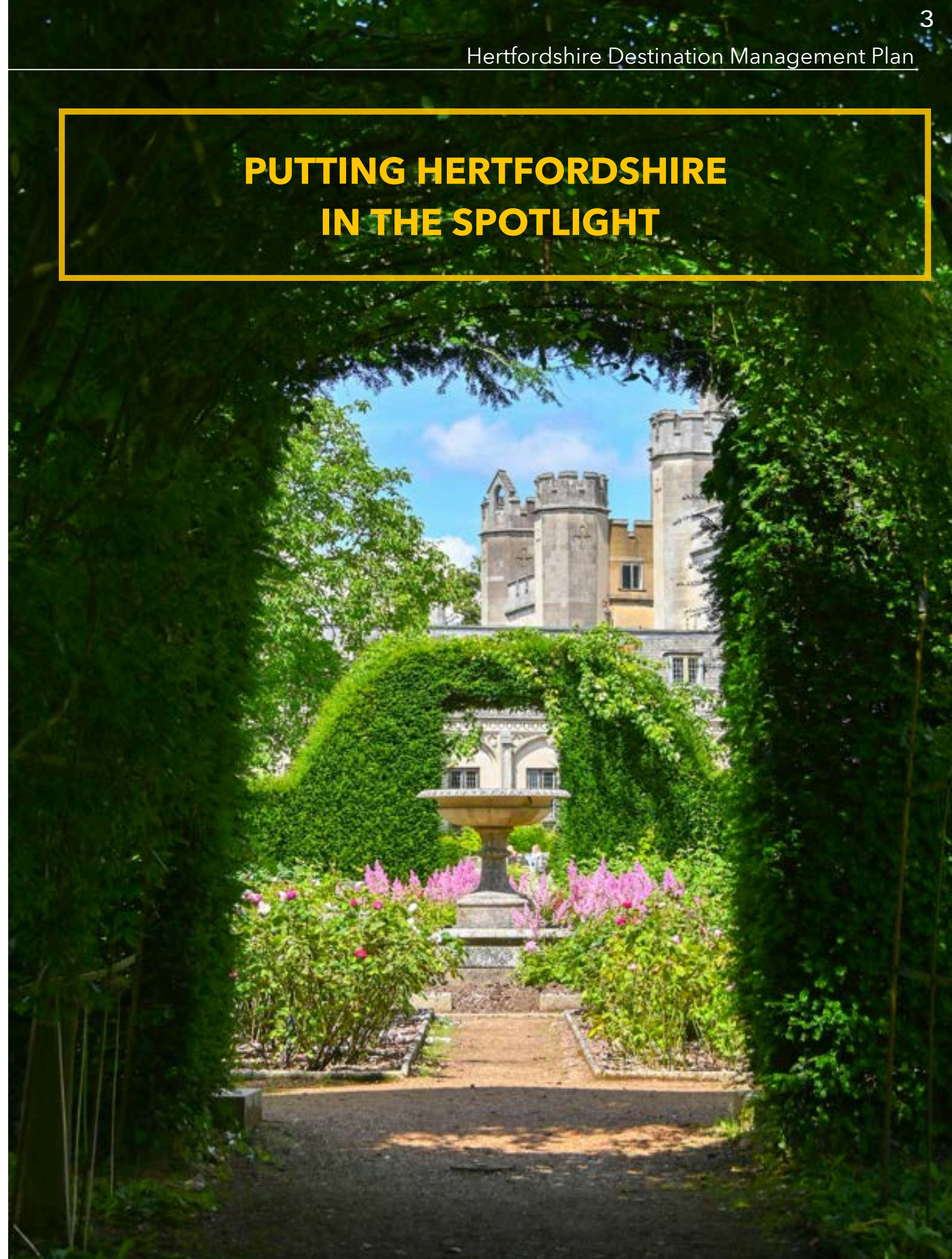


Martha Lytton Cobbold
Chair, Visit Herts



Geoff Spooner
Chair, Visit Herts

**PUTTING HERTFORDSHIRE
IN THE SPOTLIGHT**





**Local Visitor
Economy
Partnership**



As the national tourism board for England, we are pleased to endorse this Destination Management Plan for Visit Herts.

Great destinations are great places to live and work as well as to visit and strong governance can drive place-shaping and shift local and wider perceptions of the place, which can contribute to local pride. Well run destinations can also attract new investment, increase income and create new jobs.

We were delighted to award Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status to Visit Herts as one of the first round of accredited LVEPs in 2023. Since then, the LVEP has worked closely with industry partners and consulted widely across the destination to create this updated Destination Management Plan. It sets out a framework for the visitor economy around the four themes of Place, Prosperity, Product, People & Planet. The plan builds on the fantastic work already underway in Hertfordshire and puts Visit Herts in very strong position to continue to lead the development, management and marketing of the destination.

A key recommendation of the Government response to the de Bois Review of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) in England was the creation of Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) programme. The LVEPs work closely with us at VisitEngland and are at the heart of transforming the visitor economy landscape supporting its cohesion and growth in a more inclusive, accessible and sustainable way. The programme is going from strength to strength as the number of LVEPs increases, representing more of England

At VisitEngland, we look forward to working with the Visit Herts LVEP and their partners to help realise the ambitions set out in this plan.



Andrew Stokes
England Director
VisitEngland



Executive Summary

Hertfordshire welcomes over **25 million visitors** to the county each year. The visitor economy contributes **£2.2 billion to the local economy** annually and supports almost **39,000 jobs** which is 6% of all employment in the county.*

However, the sector has still not recovered fully from the impact of the pandemic and the Destination Management Plan sets out some key challenges for the county including:

- A lack of awareness of Hertfordshire and what makes it distinctive as a place
- Capitalising on the strong links to London to attract higher value visitors
- The need to encourage people to explore further and stay longer in the county through a cohesive offer

This Destination Management Plan is shaped around four overarching objectives to address these challenges and **grow the visitor economy by putting Hertfordshire in the spotlight**.



Under each of these objectives there are a set of clear and measurable priority actions which will ensure that the sector is in a strong position to build on our unique destination strengths, capitalise on emerging travel trends and build resilience to future threats. Underpinning this is our responsibility to grow our visitor economy in a sustainable way, enabling our communities and natural environment to thrive.

The plan is flexible and scalable helping us to steer collective resource and funding towards activity which will have the greatest impact over the next five years. It will also enable Visit Herts and our partners to more effectively apply sector intelligence to decision making, resulting in a greater return for our efforts.

What is a Destination Management Plan?

A Destination Management Plan (DMP) helps stakeholders to agree on a set of priorities and actions to grow and benefit from the local visitor economy. This plan sets out the current opportunities and challenges for Hertfordshire and sets out a shared vision for the destination over the next five years. It is a living document which has been designed to be flexible and position the county positively to capitalise on emerging opportunities.

As the nationally accredited Local Visitor Economy partnership (LVEP) for Hertfordshire, Visit Herts is the lead organisation for the delivery and monitoring of the DMP but it requires the support of a wide range of partners who are responsible for different aspects of the visitor experience or promotion of the destination.

The plan has been developed over six months drawing on in-depth insights and consultation with a wide range of local and industry partners.

1. Evidence Base

The plan is built on a strong foundation of sector insights drawing on visitor, resident, product, business and performance data. It also considers national data, external factors and emerging trends which will drive change.

2. Stakeholder Engagement

We have developed the plan in collaboration with public and private sector partners from across the destination through a series of workshops and 1:1 consultations to help shape strategic direction and priorities.

3. SMART Actions

Each priority has a set of clear actions linked to measures which will enable us to monitor progress. The actions are flexible and scalable enabling the destination to be agile to capitalise on opportunities and available resource.

4. Collaborative Delivery

This is a shared strategy which will only be successful with the support of a wide range of partners. We have identified the delivery partners who will be key to the success of each objective and our approach to collaborative working.

Our Values

Our Visit Herts core values – that we are Collaborative, Innovative, Perceptive and Inclusive – act as a golden thread to our Destination Management Plan, and will inform all activity and engagement with stakeholders.



Collaborative

The Hertfordshire brand is strongest when our voices and objectives are united. This destination management plan therefore is based on shared ownership and responsibility. Success is dependent on us working together, utilising the many skills and expert knowledge of Hertfordshire's businesses and stakeholders.



Innovative

The action plan is flexible, with the ability to adapt to new trends, data and external influences. Most importantly, the plan is scalable, allowing us to take advantage of new opportunities.



Perceptive

Research and data is at the heart of the plan. Every objective and action has been informed by regional, national and international insights, in addition to a series of stakeholder consultations. All of the actions are measurable.



Inclusive

From our businesses and our workforce to our visitors and residents, it is important that everyone be made to feel welcome, included and considered. People are therefore at the heart of our core objectives – People and Planet.

Delivering Social and Environmental Impact



The principle of regenerative tourism runs throughout the Destination Management Plan ensuring that active management of the visitor economy balances economic impact with positive social and environmental impact through stewardship of the destination and cross-sector collaboration. The People and Planet objective focuses on our priority of managing the visitor economy to:

“..ENCOURAGE THRIVING COMMUNITIES AND PROTECT OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.”

This includes improving the wellbeing of residents by increasing their connection to the local area, encouraging visitors to make more responsible choices, supporting businesses on their sustainability journey and ensuring that the sector is reflected in local environmental strategy. Other priorities also include key actions that local skills and employment, inclusive tourism, visitor dispersal, modal shift and championing local produce.

Visit Herts launched a Sustainable Tourism Hub in March 2024. This is a key resource in delivering on these priorities providing practical resources and tips for businesses around 10 impact areas, signposting to other local and national resources and providing advice on how to communicate progress effectively. The Impact Hero programme also showcases best practice to inspire both businesses and visitors alike.

Alignment to Local and National Strategy

The visitor economy, when managed strategically, acts as a catalyst to wider growth. Close alignment with economic, placemaking, environmental and cultural strategies will help to deliver vibrant places which offer people a good quality of life and attract people to live, work, study, invest and visit. The visitor economy can also have positive impacts for local communities helping to build pride in place and encourage participation in activities which improve wellbeing and community cohesion when sector priorities and data are fed into strategy development. It can also support the revival of highstreets and help to establish recognition through a distinctive place brand. The Destination Management Plan is designed to nest within wider local and national strategies to deliver greater impact.



Local Priorities

Visit Herts is a key delivery partner of the Hertfordshire Growth Board Missions and the emerging Economic Strategy plus other countywide strategies. We also work closely with District Councils to ensure local priorities are supported. The DMP has strong alignment with the Growth Board vision for good growth:

- A vibrant and resilient economy that seizes the right opportunities, enabling Hertfordshire's residents and businesses to succeed.
- Healthy, inclusive, safe and better-connected communities who thrive, and enjoy Hertfordshire's quality of life.
- A place that grows responsibly, and celebrates its heritage, diversity, rural and green landscapes that makes Hertfordshire special.



National Priorities

Following an independent review of Destination Management Organisations in 2021, VisitEngland launched the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) programme. Visit Herts is part of the nationally accredited portfolio of strategic and high-performing DMOs who work locally, regionally and nationally on shared priorities through VisitEngland Growth Plans.

As an accredited LVEP, Visit Herts is actively involved in shaping the new England strategy and national approach to regenerative tourism. We will work with national policy makers to ensure that our strategy aligns with Government plans for economic growth and improved productivity.

External Factors and Key Trends

As part of the DMP development process, a full PESTLE analysis and review of key global consumer travel trends was conducted. These external trends will influence consumer behaviour and the sector both positively and negatively over the timeframe of this plan. We have taken these factors into account when setting priorities and have built in continuous monitoring of emerging trends and the flexibility to respond to the changing political or economic landscape.

Some of the other factors identified in the PESTLE are captured elsewhere in the document but we have summarised the most relevant themes below.

Relaxation and Wellness

The top reason for travel in 2024 is to rest and recharge. This focus on physical and mental wellbeing means that people seek out activities and experiences that offer wellness benefits.

Experiences Over Things

People increasingly place more emphasis on the purchase of experiences over things. They seek out authentic local experiences and take microcations to spend quality time together.

Conscious Consumer

As awareness of environmental impact grows, consumer demand will drive more sustainable options but price remains a big barrier. Rising global temperatures will also see travel patterns change.

The Pursuit of Value

Pressure on disposable income has made consumers cautious. They have a savvier mindset, actively looking to find ways to get better quality at a lower cost. They also value unique or exclusive experiences.

Rising Business Costs

The economic climate has also hit businesses hard with rising supplier, staff and energy costs contributing to squeezed profit margins. The uncertain economic climate has also delayed investment decisions.

Aging Population

The purple pound is already worth £14.6 billion and set to grow. By 2040 nearly 1 in 7 people will be aged over 75 meaning far more visitors with accessibility needs. Multi generational travel is also a growing trend.

Working Patterns

Flexible working is set to stay with people valuing a work-life balance and leisure travel now driving growth in transport use. Business travel is becoming blended with leisure and a need to reconnect with teams.

AI and Media Consumption

Consumers expect convenience in all aspects of their lives and technology will drive new ways to embed this into the customer journey. New media platforms present opportunities to influence decisions but we need to adapt.

Performance

The 2022 Hertfordshire Economic Impact Study demonstrates that Hertfordshire's tourism industry continues to recover strongly from the impact of the COVID19 pandemic, with a total value of £2.2 billion, an increase of 40% vs 2021.

The data shows a significant uplift in jobs and visits in 2022, demonstrating the importance of the sector. Whilst volume and value of visits, and number of jobs are below 2019 levels, this gap has significantly reduced since 2021.

In addition to this, length of stay and spend per head have all increased, and are now tracking higher than 2019 levels, and current national levels. An ongoing objective for Hertfordshire, which will be seen throughout this action plan, is to increase the length of stay in the destination and spend per visit. The 2022 data shows that domestic overnight visitors to the county stay on average 4.6 nights compared to an average of 3 nights across England as a whole. The average spend per overnight trip in Hertfordshire is £295.33 compared to £258 across England.

In 2022 we also saw the much-needed return of international visitors back to the county which was driven by visits to friends and relatives. With 76% of Hertfordshire's international visits driven by visiting friends and family, the Hyper Local audience remains an important part of our consumer engagement, ensuring residents are transformed into ambassadors, encouraging their visitors to take trips and spend within the county.

The increase in visits was also driven by the return of business travel, which in 2022 accounted for 16% of all trips in 2022. However, the way people travel for business has seen a permanent change, and therefore the destination will need to respond to new trends such as incentive travel and bleisure in order to ensure continued growth in this area.

Cost of living, the economic climate and challenges around staff recruitment are all concerns for the destination moving forward. With 54% of Hertfordshire residents reporting worsened finances in 2023, consumer marketing will need to respond to these concerns, highlighting the value and quality of Hertfordshire's offer. In addition to this, skills and recruitment remain a challenge for Hertfordshire businesses, with 25% citing staff recruitment and retention as a challenge in the 2023 Hertfordshire Growth Hub Cost of Living Business Survey Results. This action plan will need to work in partnership with local authorities, colleges and businesses to integrate hospitality needs into skills initiatives, while helping to change the perception of a career in hospitality.



£2.2B

VALUE
UP 40% VS 2021
DOWN 9% VS 2019

25M

TRIPS
UP 28% VS 2021
DOWN 14% VS 2019



76%

OF INTERNATIONAL
VISITORS IN 2022 WERE
VISITING FRIENDS AND
RELATIVES



38,936

JOB - 6% OF ALL
EMPLOYMENT
UP 15% VS 2021
DOWN 10% VS 2019



COST OF LIVING
ECONOMIC
CLIMATE
STAFF
RECRUITMENT



80.9%

AVERAGE OCCUPANCY
UP 10.4% VS 2022

Perceptions



Looking at consumer product testing and perception research conducted in 2022, when asking both visitor and non-visitors about Hertfordshire, there are many positive associations of the county that will have a strong influence on future visits. The region is mostly associated with being a traditional, relaxing countryside location with key attributes including the natural beauty, heritage offer and that it's easy to get to the county.

However, some perceptions around the county being affluent could be challenging as people are more conscious of spending so there is a need to focus on important messaging around value.

Naturally, residents were able to identify distinct attributes of the county, however overall general awareness of Hertfordshire is low outside of the county with only 38% of people being familiar or very familiar. This is also reflected in the overall perceptions, which whilst positive and include history and heritage, shopping, and architecture, aren't particularly distinct or unique to Hertfordshire.

In order to build a stronger USP for the county, there is a need to raise awareness of product and strengths in the county that people are less aware of. Looking at the perception research, there are opportunities to increase awareness of Hertfordshire's local produce, events and festivals as well as to further develop the screen tourism product and to position Hertfordshire as the home of film and TV.

Hertfordshire was recognised by Expedia as one of the UK's Top hidden gems for short breaks with demand on Vrbo increasing by more than 40%. The quality of the accommodation in the county is a clear strength and with 72% of people who haven't visited the county being open to visiting for a short break, this is a real opportunity to drive overnight stays into the county, in addition to cross-selling all the things there are to do in the region that warrant a longer trip.



38%

FAMILIAR OR VERY FAMILIAR WITH HERTFORDSHIRE



72%

NON-VISITORS WOULD CONSIDER AN OVERNIGHT BREAK



53%

NON-VISITORS DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SEE AND DO IN HERTFORDSHIRE



32%

CONSIDER HERTFORDSHIRE FOR SCREEN TOURISM EXPERIENCES



57%

ASSOCIATE HERTFORDSHIRE WITH QUALITY FOOD AND DRINK

Audience

Visit Herts' marketing is targeted at four key audiences - social contemporary seekers, families, green spacers and hyper local. These audiences have been developed from national and local data, taking into consideration each audience's demographics, interests, decision making points and preferred media sources. The full Hertfordshire audience breakdown can be found separately in the appendix.

Hertfordshire residents are a key focus within our strategy and require a different approach to help encourage participation and connection with their local area. They are also our greatest ambassadors and support the crucial visiting friends and relatives market which accounted for 44% of visits in 2022. Our resident research also shows that 16% of Hertfordshire residents had stayed overnight elsewhere in the county for leisure in the last year and 65% had taken a day trip in Hertfordshire. Furthermore, a strong connection to place is central to developing strong communities and pride in place.

With a growing and aging population, 17 of the UK population will be over 75 by 2040. Experiences appealing to older visitors will therefore need to be a consideration in the next five years. The aging UK population and the estimated £14.7 billion value of the Purple Pound in England mean visitors with accessibility needs continue to be a priority in our destination.

Despite excellent transport links from London, 77% of visitors arrive by car, with key barriers being cost, convenience and connections to rural businesses by public transport, in addition to challenges around travelling from East to West. Working with local transport providers, in addition to communications which encourage modal shift will therefore need to be a consideration over the coming years.

In addition to our primary markets, we will continue to target key secondary markets. This includes international inbound visitors from the US and Northern Europe. We will also continue to work closely with both domestic and international tour operators and agents to position Kent as a leading tour destination, in addition to supporting meetings, incentive, corporate, events agents (MICE) and destination management companies to host and welcome delegates and business travel into the county.

We will need to monitor and respond to these and further emerging visitor trends, markets and product to ensure activity is both targeted and effective.



Social contemporary seekers

PREDOMINANTLY THE MILLENNIAL MARKET COMPRISING OF COUPLES AND SMALL GROUPS OF FRIENDS PRE-CHILDREN OR COUPLES WITH VERY YOUNG CHILDREN



Changing family dynamic

FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT AGES, INCLUDING MORE INTERGENERATIONAL MEMBERS AND SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES



Green spacers
Older couples

OLDER COUPLES OF DIFFERENT AGES, INTERESTED IN THE OUTDOORS, WITH EITHER MORE TRADITIONAL OR CULTURAL EXPERIENCES



Hyper local Families (VFR)

THIS INCLUDES LOCAL KENT RESIDENTS, ENCOURAGING THEM TO EXPLORE THEIR LOCAL AREA FOR A DAY TRIP OR SHORT BREAK

Residents



72%

35-44S DAY TRIPPED IN HERTFORDSHIRE



65%

TOOK A LEISURE DAY TRIP IN HERTS

16%

TOOK AN OVERNIGHT TRIP



Visitors



44%

COUPLES AGED 55+

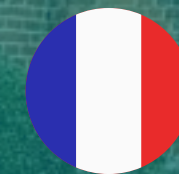
48%

VISITED AS A FAMILY UNIT



77%

TRAVEL TO HERTFORDSHIRE BY CAR



inbound targets of US and Northern Europe



Established relationships with travel trade



Support for MICE agents and event buyers

Product themes

RESIDENTS

THINK HERTFORDSHIRE TOP TOURISM PRODUCT IS

COUNTRYSIDE
HERITAGE
FILM AND TV
FOOD AND DRINK



BUT WHAT THEY DO THEMSELVES INCLUDES...

RETAIL
OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES
FESTIVALS AND THEATRE



VISITING HISTORIC MARKET TOWNS AND PRETTY VILLAGES WITH VISITING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES



49%

DO NOT ASSOCIATE HERTFORDSHIRE WITH EVENTS AND FESTIVALS



50%

NON-VISITORS WOULD BE INFLUENCED BY QUALITY FOOD AND DRINK



37%

NON-VISITORS WOULD BE INFLUENCED BY THINGS TO SEE AND DO ALL YEAR ROUND



1 in 4

VISITORS FROM LONDON SEE ACCOMMODATION AS DRIVING FORCE

In the recent Hertfordshire Residents survey, residents identified countryside, heritage, film and TV and food and drink as the key attractions for their area. However, when asked about their own visits within the county, retail was the most selected activity they took part in, followed by outdoor experiences, festivals and theatre.

It's interesting to see that whilst residents identify heritage and film as attractions for both their visitors and visitors to the county, they weren't so high on the list in terms of their own activities in the county. In fact, when entertaining visiting friends and relatives, the number one activity was visiting Hertfordshire's many historic destinations, with historic market towns and pretty villages topping the list. This presents a real opportunity to showcase more of Hertfordshire rural villages and towns as great places to visit, and present the experiences available here.

Unsurprisingly, many of the product themes within the county can be quite easily split into heritage, film and culture, landscapes, and food and drink. However, there is limited knowledge of what there is to see and do in Hertfordshire. There is a need to increase the awareness of attractions and experiences – particularly amongst non-visitors, including many not associating Hertfordshire with events and festivals product.

Finally, the importance of accessibility for day-trips or short-breaks is a reminder that attractions should be easy to get to and around – especially those that appeal to older demographics, or grandparents. At the same time, amenities are also important and can present opportunity for attractions to link with other experiences and venues such as hotels, restaurants and bars – encouraging fuller days out and longer stays.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Proximity to London and ease of access
- Wealth of countryside and green landscapes
- History and heritage
- Family friendly attractions
- Quintessential villages and countryside
- Quality accommodation offer
- Food and drink product
- Film and TV production
- Warner Bros. Studio Tour London - The Making of Harry Potter

Weaknesses

- Lack of a distinctive identity/USP from limited awareness of Hertfordshire's strengths
- Can be perceived as expensive or posh
- East to West transport in the county
- Low awareness of the county due to lack of distinct borders between London and other home counties
- Greater awareness of key destinations and product than the county itself e.g. Warner Bros Studio Tour London - The Making of Harry Potter is perceived as being in London, not Hertfordshire
- Parking and traffic
- Short-term funding streams leading to less strategic interventions

Opportunities

- Food and drink
- MICE and Bleisure product and trends
- Create joint itineraries with bordering counties
- Screen tourism
- Ambassadors - residents
- Proximity to London
- Market towns
- Festivals and events
- Funding
- A hidden gem on London's doorstep - chance to raise awareness among trade and consumers
- Landscapes and green spaces
- Accommodation - utilize to create experiential stays
- Educational visits
- Personalities and historic stories of Hertfordshire
- Engagement with airports

Threats

- Cost of living
- Climate change
- Writers and actors strikes
- Public transport strikes and costs
- Cuts to public funding
- Increasing business operating costs
- Greater awareness of competitor destinations
- Risk to the canals being decommissioned
- Local produce supply chain
- Change in business travel and trends
- Managing footfall in environmentally sensitive areas
- Political priorities and general uncertainty as priorities change

WHAT DOES HERTFORDSHIRE MEAN TO YOU?

- A beautiful destination
- Historic high streets
- Connections to London
- Market towns
- Lacking easily tangible places and qualities
- Easily accessible green space
- Community
- Rural
- Great place to live, work and play
- Film industry
- Local experiences
- Local artists and makers
- Diverse
- Affluent older people
- Not too urbanised
- Local hub for larger companies
- Lack of brand and USP
- Countryside and city
- Local produce

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HERTFORDSHIRE?

- Hidden gems
- Local produce
- Packaging trips
- Green space
- Beryl bikes
- Proximity to London
- Biodiversity net gains scheme
- Film
- Market towns
- Hertfordshire is a destination in its own right
- Affluent population
- Asset mapping
- Amazing place to live and work
- Create a cohesive brand
- Better value transport and hotel rates
- Widen A1M
- Good transport for London

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES IN THE DESTINATION?

- Transport from East to West
- No firm brand or USP
- Competition with other destinations
- Transport links to work
- Poor WIFI
- Lack of internal public transport
- Need more localised bike sharing
- Reliance on cars
- Aging population
- Through county to London
- Lack of transport between counties
- Proximity to London
- Staff recruitment
- No single centre to draw visitors
- London sprawl into green space
- Lack of understanding of the destination
- Diversity of offer is hard to market

WHAT BUSINESS SUPPORT DO YOU NEED?

- Lobbying around key issues
- Increased collaboration with businesses
- Business and 1:1 support
- Collective marketing
- Press and influencer trips
- Help to disperse visitor footfall
- Screen tourism - data and insights, promotions, develop packages

Industry consultation

Objectives

1. Place

Put Hertfordshire on the map as an attractive place to live, work, invest, and visit

2. Prosperity

Grow the value of the visitor economy with a focus on delivering opportunity, prosperity and jobs across the county.

3. Product

Support the creation of a high-quality visitor offer which is dynamic and responsive to emerging visitor trends.

4. People & Planet

Manage the visitor economy to encourage thriving communities and protect our natural environment



Action Plan

Following stakeholder engagement, we have identified the strengths, challenges and opportunities for Hertfordshire. Our action plan contains four key objectives for the destination, which will guide us and wider stakeholders for future support and delivery. Within these four objectives there are two to three priorities, which each have their own actions and measures.

Sustainability and accessibility remain vital to the destination and are therefore woven through all four objectives.

Place

Prosperity

Product

People and Planet

Sustainability & accessibility

Place

Priorities	Action	Measures
<p>Priority 1.1: Increase brand awareness and perceptions of Hertfordshire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build ambassadors and educate strategic partners including VisitEngland, press, trade, event organisers and local influencers. • Develop rights free place assets, in addition to lifestyle content to positively promote the diversity of the destination. • Work closely with partners involved in promoting the place to wider audiences such as investors, students or skilled workers to highlight the quality of life. 	<p>Improved perception metrics around the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of the food and drink (57%) • Events and festivals (22%) • Lots to see and do all year round (49%) • Quality accommodation (40%) • Welcoming and friendly (56%)
<p>Priority 1.2: Position Hertfordshire as the UK's Hollywood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop stronger relationships with filming officers, film distributors and studios to enable more timely content which links destination to location. • Set up a screen tourism working group to support product development, collaboration and distribution through trade. • Collaborate with VisitEngland through the LVEP programme to ensure Hertfordshire is a hero destination within the Great Britain screen tourism offer. • Develop tactical activity to drive media attention around Hertfordshire's position as a leading film production hub. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR reach and coverage • Increase in awareness of Hertfordshire as a place to make and experience filming - Resident and perception research • Amount of location filming taking place in the area - Hertfordshire Film Office

Objective one:

Put Hertfordshire on the map as an attractive place to live, work, invest and visit

Key partnerships

Invest Hertfordshire

University of Herts

Hertfordshire Futures

Private sector Partners

Film Studios

VisitBritain / VisitEngland

Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire Film Office

Hertfordshire Growth Board

Objective two:

Grow the value of the visitor economy with a focus on delivering opportunity, prosperity and jobs across the county.



Prosperity

Priorities	Action	Measures
<p>Priority 2.1: Capitalise on proximity to London and position Hertfordshire as a short break destination for leisure and business visitors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop inspirational short break package ideas and itineraries to position Hertfordshire as a retreat from London. • Capitalise on bleisure and growing incentive travel trends by working with local partners and industry colleagues, such as London and Partners. • Continue proactive engagement with travel trade, including youth travel, to position Hertfordshire as a new and authentic addition to any London itinerary. • Work with HCC, regional and LVEP partners to develop greater relationships with transport providers, including GTR and nearby airports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of the visitor economy - Economic Impact Study • Increased number of overnight stays and average length of stay - Economic Impact Study • Maintain average serviced accommodation occupancy over 80.6% - STR Data • Improved perception of accommodation (
<p>Priority 2.2: Attract local people to work in the sector by addressing skill gaps and removing barriers to work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the needs of the tourism and hospitality sector are integrated into local skills initiatives by working closely with local authorities and colleges. • Support businesses to engage in skills initiatives and improve the attractiveness of their offer to the workforce. • Change the perceptions of a career in tourism and hospitality by working with industry and LVEP colleagues to promote opportunities for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of jobs supported by the visitor economy - Economic Impact Study • Number of vacancies in the sector - Hertfordshire Futures

Key partnerships

Travel trade and distribution partners

Hertfordshire Futures

Educational partners

District Councils

VisitBritain / VisitEngland

Hertfordshire County Council

Transport partners

Private Sector partners

Objective three:

Support the creation of a high-quality visitor offer which is dynamic and responsive to emerging visitor trends.

Product

Priorities	Action	Measures
<p>Priority 3.1: Develop new and engaging experiences for the county that amplify Hertfordshire's unique stories and distinctive assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a product gap analysis mapping opportunities and strengths of Hertfordshire against visitor trends, seasonality and audiences. • Support existing tourism businesses and those outside of the sector to diversify their offer with new bookable tourism experiences. • Expand the range of local and distinctive product partners to increase engagement with live music and event organisers, sports venues, creatives and wellness providers. • Strengthen connections with local producers, improve supply chains and champion local produce in content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new businesses and organisations engaged each year for the first time • Number of events and experiences promoted in destination feature content
<p>Priority 3.2: Encourage business collaboration to develop targeted packages that cross-sell product across the county and increase visitor dispersal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate informal sector forums focused on knowledge exchange between peers and shared challenges. • Disseminate valuable data and sector insights and support partners to apply these insights to their own strategies. • Continue to deliver a networking programme, with a focus on business introductions, case studies, sector insights and learning opportunities. • Create editorial which cross-sells geographical product clusters, including hidden gems and villages to help disperse visitors from honey pot destinations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased partner satisfaction of events programme • Achieve a good spread of visitors to districts throughout the year - Economic Impact Study • Decline in total number of respondents who 'feel there are too many visitors in their local area' - Hertfordshire Residents Research

Objective three:

Support the creation of a high-quality visitor offer which is dynamic and responsive to emerging visitor trends.

Product cont.

Priorities	Action	Measures
<p>Priority 3.3: Improve the quality, inclusivity and accessibility of Hertfordshire's visitor offer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise the new VisitEngland LVEP accessibility resources and toolkits, along with other local initiatives, to support partners to improve accessibility and access guides within the destination. • Better integrate inclusive content and accessible information across Visit Herts channels. • Encourage participation and disseminate information about the new free VisitEngland quality scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses signed up to quality scheme • Number of businesses with access guides • Engagement with inclusive and accessible content

Key partnerships

Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire Agricultural Society

Travel trade partners

BIDs

District Councils

VisitBritain /VisitEngland

Private Sector Partners

Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce

Hertfordshire Growth Hub

Objective four:

Manage the visitor economy to encourage thriving communities and protect our natural environment.

People & Planet

Priorities	Action	Measures
<p>Priority 4.1: Improve the wellbeing of residents by increasing their connection to the local area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on our engagement with the Hyper Local audience through targeted resident campaigns and segmented communications to strengthen pride in place. • Improve connection to the local area through messaging and education that encourages access to green spaces and local culture. • Utilise local ambassadors and channels to engage and spread awareness among harder to reach audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and grow the % of Hertfordshire residents agreeing that they feel strongly connected to their local area (baseline 76%) • Pride in place – Herts Big Weekend participant responses remain stable or increase when asked are you, or would you be proud to show your friends and family around Hertfordshire. • Engagement levels with green spaces and cultural assets – Hertfordshire Residents Research.
<p>Priority 4.2: Reduce the impact of Hertfordshire's visitor economy on climate and nature.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the priorities of tourism businesses and visitors are embedded within local transport, nature and climate strategy to ensure the sector contributes positively. • Support businesses on their sustainability journey with sector-specific resources, toolkits, advice and best practice. • Encourage visitors to make more responsible choices through communications and messaging that inspires and educates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of strategy consultations that we feed into • Web traffic to sustainable tourism resource hub and impact heroes • Engagement with inspirational content with behaviour change messaging

Key partnerships

Private sector partners

Hertfordshire Cultural Officers

District Councils

Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust

VisitBritain / VisitEngland

Hertfordshire County Council

Transport partners

Chilterns National Landscape

Our Approach to Delivery

The Destination Management Plan will require collaboration between a wide range of public and private sector partners from across the county to maximise the opportunities. Key partners that have a role to play have been identified in each priority area of the action plan.

As the Local Visitor Economy Partnership, Visit Herts will take overall responsibility for delivery, supporting collaboration and product development, county-wide marketing, travel trade engagement and monitoring progress. Visit Herts will also act as the link to VisitEngland, VisitBritain and other national organisations, ensuring alignment with national initiatives and representation for Hertfordshire. The Visit Herts Partnership Group will have oversight of the Destination Management Plan with representation from local authorities, a range of private sector businesses and strategic delivery partners.

The Destination Management Plan has been designed to be flexible and scalable. This means that we are ready to capitalise on opportunities aligned to priorities as they emerge but also to ramp up activity around a specific priority where resource and funding allows.

By working collaboratively we can ensure that new local initiatives and support programmes work for the visitor economy and that the sector is built into strategies. This approach will also help to unlock additional funding to increase delivery around specific priorities through targeted projects.

Measures have been identified to track progress against each of the actions and these will be reviewed annually. Ongoing sector performance and long-term impacts are monitored through an in depth research programme which includes:

- Economic Impact studies
- Accommodation occupancy and attraction performance
- Social impact resident research
- Visitor and perception research

Other metrics which are captured through output monitoring and digital metrics on an ongoing basis. The level of impact on these measures will be dependant on resource and funding.





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Meet the Visit Herts team



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VisitEngland Business Advice Hub: Make your business accessible and inclusive

MDAS: Motivations, influences, decisions and sustainability research 2022

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VisitEngland Domestic Sentiment Tracker

Stakeholder engagement workshops held in 2023-2024 with Visit Herts investor partners and local authority partners

Images

Cover: Boxmoor Trust

Treasure Map Trails - Hatfield Park

Ashridge House

Treasure Map Trails

The Grove

Knebworth House

Tewinbury Farm

Henry Moore Studios & Gardens

The Snow Centre

Baldock

Digswell Viaduct

Hertford Castle

Stevenage

St Albans Cathedral

Tewinbury Farm

Verulamium Park

Knebworth

Hatfield Park

The Grove

Boxmoor Trust

Cassiobury Park

Hitchin Lavender

Hatfield Park

Watford



Contact us

The work to create this Plan has been coordinated and overseen by Visit Herts in collaboration with the tourism industry across the county. This plan represents the county, reflects its vibrancy and ambition to grow.

We would like to thank all those who have taken part and supported this process.

If you have any questions about the Hertfordshire Destination Management Plan or would like to get involved, please email enquires@visitherts.co.uk.



www.visithertsbusiness.co.uk

