

Visitor Economy Action Plan – Recommendations**1. Identify a destination branding hierarchy for Lincolnshire.**

Visit Lincolnshire.com, Visit East Lincolnshire, Discover North East Lincolnshire, the Lincolnshire Wolds or Visit Lincoln are just a few destinations that are currently promoted to consumers locally and nationally. The Greater Lincolnshire LEP's place marketing project should find out which of the existing and emerging destination brands is relevant for specific audiences – local, regional, national - and outline a branding hierarchy for Lincolnshire. This is in keeping with the nature of the place marketing project which aims to create a framework for promotion rather than a place brand for all audiences. Specifically it should test if there is a place in the hierarchy for a county brand. It may be useful to look to a near neighbour for insight: Yorkshire has a strong county brand with national and international resonance and a set of descriptive sub brands that provide breadth and depth to the Yorkshire proposition: North York Moors, Yorkshire Dales, Yorkshire Wolds etc. It also has a set of destinations - York, Whitby, Scarborough, Leeds – that can stand alone in certain markets but are clearly related to and benefit from being part of Yorkshire.

The aim should be to help tourism businesses better understand which destinations are most relevant to them as they seek to grow their customer base, to focus local authorities and other stakeholders on the best destinations to put in front of the consumer and to help clarify for consumers what Lincolnshire has to offer. In due course it could suggest how the area could organise and focus its resources.

2. Produce a comprehensive body of information about visitors to Greater Lincolnshire

Good market intelligence will support good decision making. It can be used to direct investment, guide promotion, develop product and promote collaboration where there are common interests. Essentially it will help Lincolnshire to become customer focused. Included in this body of information should be:

- Visitor profiling/segmentation: a clear picture of who is visiting, an analysis of their characteristics, interests, information channels, motivations and as well as good understanding of future visitor trends.
- Visitor satisfaction: information about what visitors like, don't like and what would encourage them to stay longer and return more often.
- Identification of non-visitor groups: better understanding of who isn't visiting Lincolnshire and why to help develop new product and new audiences.

Existing marketing intelligence should be gathered together to identify what is and isn't known. Recent work by the Nature Partnership, the Cultural Partnership, a LEP-

led study to look at supply and demand in the accommodation sector are just three examples where research has been undertaken and doesn't need repeating. There will be gaps and once these are identified they can be filled to produce a comprehensive picture.

Much of what is instinctively known and understood by the businesses and organisations active in the visitor economy will be confirmed in this process and new intelligence will help everyone look forward and adjust their activity.

3. Produce a place marketing toolkit for visitor economy businesses.

Out of the branding and market intelligence work produce a toolkit for visitor economy businesses that explains how they can align themselves with the destinations and brands that make most sense to visitors and to themselves.

4. Maximise the opportunities offered by Hull 2017 and Mayflower 400.

Both events are national celebrations and offer a great opportunity to Lincolnshire. Hull 2017 are keen to work with Lincolnshire and see it as the solution to some of their challenges such as providing additional bed stock at highpoints in their calendar. VESR or North Lincolnshire Council are best placed to liaise with Hull 2017 and to lead on coordinating activity across Lincolnshire related to the event.

Discussions around Mayflower 400 are already underway but many in the county feel that there is more talk than action. Lincolnshire County Council should take a lead bring together all stakeholders together and get agreement on how Lincolnshire is going to get maximum benefit from the anniversary, what actions/projects will be delivered and who is going to lead on working with external partners.

5. Create a new Visitor Economy sector forum.

Recommendations 1-4 require someone or a group to drive them forward, ensure they are done well, communicate the results and champion the sector. Rather than merge existing groups, it is suggested that a new group is established that follows the make up and style of existing sector boards that are used by the Greater Lincolnshire LEP to guide sector development. Existing sector boards are private sector-led, have circa 16 representatives with 60% of membership drawn from the private sector and 40% from the public sector. The Greater Lincolnshire LEP should take the lead in establishing a Visitor Economy Board.

Key tasks for the sector board will be:

- commission and oversee the market intelligence review, and any research projects that it identifies
- input into the place marketing project and ensure the brand question is answered

- empower organisations to lead on Hull 2017 and Mayflower 400 and monitor progress
- commission a place marketing toolkit for tourism businesses
- lead on communications across Lincolnshire relating to the visitor economy including highlighting the priorities of product development, skills and business support, and the results of the market research

The sector board should set a timetable for these actions and consider appointing a consultant or organisation to deliver them.

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