



Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Date:	16 April 2024
Subject:	Strategic Plan Objectives for the Visitor Economy in Lincolnshire

Summary:

This report gives an update on the strategic priorities of Lincolnshire County Council's Visit Lincolnshire team. This is influenced by the analytics of the www.visitlincolnshire.com site, tourism research and our business support work with the visitor economy.

It shows the substantial progress made by VLS to promote Greater Lincolnshire to visitors. The website needs to constantly evolve and develop to meet consumer requirements.

Actions Required

Members of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee are invited to:

- 1) Note the current progress of the Visit Lincolnshire Team and website
- 2) Note the 2024/25 development plan and priorities as outlined in the report
- 3) Endorse the strategy for www.visitlincolnshire.com

1. Background

The vision of Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) tourism team is to achieve an ambitious and sustainable tourism sector in Greater Lincolnshire which grows, increases in value, and provides jobs, investment, and quality.

Our strategic aims are to ensure:

- All businesses in Greater Lincolnshire are aware of www.visitlincolnshire.com (VLS) and use it to promote and increase their business.
- All businesses in Greater Lincolnshire have the opportunity to understand and access the full range of support offers.
- www.business.visitlincolnshire.com (BVLS) offers easily accessible advice and toolkits that new and existing businesses will find useful and constructive.
- That our two websites keep up with visitor trends and business challenges encouraging businesses to grow through embracing change.

To address our challenges we must be future focused, adapting to a continually changing audience and using the analytics of VLS to understand what the visitor wants and how they use the site. We will address future sustainability so that Greater Lincolnshire flies the 'Green Tourism' flag, using our Green Tourism toolkit and accompanying training. We will set Product Development priorities and determine where finite resources should be focused (2024 priorities below).

Our action areas are:

- Ensure that VLS is beautifully curated, and inspires, informs and presents all aspects of the Greater Lincolnshire tourism offer.
- Product development on VLS is a constant, showcasing Greater Lincolnshire's strengths so it is easily accessible to the consumer.
- Provide advice that meets identified business needs and work to embrace digital opportunity.
- Consider a post 2024 sustainable business model and address commerciality without damaging VLS brand values.
- Attract large scale investments to continually improve the offer.
- Work with the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) to create a strong partnership and a joined-up approach to tourism in Greater Lincolnshire.

VLS has its own strategy (Appendix A) which details its vision and objectives; content, tone and brand values.

Product Development Priorities for 2024

- a) **Nature Tourism:** Walking, cycling, bird and seal watching and nature reserves will be gathered together under the umbrella of Nature Tourism. This gives us the opportunity to better promote new developments such as the King Charles III England Coast Path which will have a high profile area to match the Viking Way as our two flagship walks. The expansion of the Saltfleetby/Theddlethorpe National Nature Reserve to become the Lincolnshire Coronation Coast National Nature Reserve; the National Trust's development of a reserve at the old Sandilands golf course within the Coastal Country Park; re-wilding at Boothby Wildlands and at Doddington Hall; completion of the last two Bird Trails giving full county coverage. All showing that Lincolnshire has a lot to offer.
- b) **Market Towns:** The website analytics show that many visitors are searching via the towns of Lincolnshire. We will increase the content, ensuring that we get across the individuality and personality of each town. There will be more business entries, particularly retail and places to eat.
- c) **Segmentation/Packaging:** Our two main markets are 50+ Empty Nesters and Families with children. Through segmentation we will present Lincolnshire appropriately to different markets. Through better search functionality visitors will be able to put together their own itineraries and packages.
- d) **Getting Here and Getting Around:** Improvements to where we are, ease of access and getting round whilst in the county.

- e) **Rebrand the Green Tourism Toolkit:** It will become the Green Hospitality Toolkit as the existing content is applicable to a wider variety of businesses than just tourism. It will see additional case studies added, particularly covering the retail sector.
- f) **Update Digital Business Support:** www.business.visitlincolnshire.com contains our support to business and includes over 70 video masterclasses. The site launched in 2022 but digital is a fast-changing subject and we need to ensure our content is up to date and that our businesses are responding to the demands of our visitors.
- g) **Experiences:** Working with businesses to encourage them to develop ideas, inspiration and packages.

Destination Lincolnshire is leading a Destination Management Plan (DMP) for Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland and we await its completion. Our work will be aligned to the LVEP policy and emerging devolution conversations.

Our contribution to the county’s tourism includes operation of www.visitlincolnshire.com as an “*attract and disperse*” website, delivery of business support to a wide range of SMEs in the tourism sector, both 1:1 and backed up by www.business.visitlincolnshire.com , and product development based on nature tourism.

2. Conclusion

The work we have delivered to date and the strategic role we undertake will enable us to continue to develop the sector and to increase the number of high spending staying visitors to the county, focusing on our strengths of city, coast, and countryside. We are committed to working in partnership with Destination Lincolnshire and see that the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) process as an enhancement of our support to the Visitor Economy Sector. The Environment and Scrutiny Committee is invited to review and endorse the activity to date and the proposed future plans.

3. Consultation

- a) **Risks and Impact Analysis**
n/a

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Visit Lincolnshire 2024 Website Strategy

5. Background Papers

No background papers within 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Mary Powell, Place & Investment Manager, who can be contacted on 01986 805018 or mary.powell@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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