

Project Name: Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan 2025-2030

Reference: A-372 (Develop a new Tourism Growth Plan)

## Background

Blaby District Council commissioned Business Tourism Solutions (BTS) in 2019 to create a Tourism Growth Plan for the district. The Growth Plan was developed in consultation with the Blaby District Tourism Partnership, it was approved at Full Council and provided a framework for action over five years. The plan was closely aligned to and effectively integrated with the key existing tourism strategies across Leicestershire.

The Tourism Growth Plan plays a vital role in the Blaby District Plan 2024-2028, to help achieve its vision to ensure Blaby District is a great place to visit. It is key to 'growing and supporting our economy', through increasing visitor numbers, spend and employment in the district. It also plays a pivotal role in the Blaby District Economic Development Framework, creating a sense of pride in place for our residents, workers and those who visit.

As the plan comes up for renewal in April 2025, we have set out an overview of where we are now, opportunities for the future and a draft brief to help shape a new 5-year plan for 2025–2030.

## Project Objectives

In the current Tourism Growth Plan, the vision and main ambitions are:

### Vision

“By 2025, Blaby District will be one of Leicestershire’s leading and most welcoming and sustainable tourism destinations attracting staying and day visitors from across the UK”.

### Ambitions

1.

The latest data from 2022 shows tourism figures in Blaby District are continuing to rise in all the areas above. In particular, the value of tourism has surpassed pre covid numbers with a 26% increase from 2021 to 2022 (now standing at £190m). Despite the impact of covid, a further positive year in 24/25 will see the figures close to achieving the ambitions originally set out above.

Looking ahead at the next five years, we have identified several key objectives to further develop these ambitions and build on the success of the current Tourism Growth Plan. Our overarching aim is to further increase our targets and position Blaby District firmly on the map as a key destination in Leicestershire, attracting visitors from across the UK.

## Benefits

Our aim is to grow the Council's reputation as a leading authority for supporting the local tourism and hospitality sector, and to align with both the Blaby District Plan 2024-2028 and the Economic Development Framework. Building Pride in Place and supporting growth in our economy through ensuring the district is a great place to visit and visitor numbers continue to rise.

We aim to:

- widen the visibility of Blaby District as a destination by continuing to grow our online presence through our website and social media channels
- continue to increase the value of the sector, leading to successful local companies and more job opportunities for residents
- support Tourism, Retail and Hospitality businesses to lead the way in creating sustainable and low carbon operations
- ensure local businesses provide career paths to engage young people to join and remain in the sector
- look at ways to increase the number of visitors who stay overnight to maximise local spend
- expand our accommodation offering, with the aim of attracting investment from the sector to increase overnight stays.

The Tourism Partnership will play a pivotal role, it has 70 members, and we will continue to expand its membership, with businesses working together to help us collectively achieve our objectives.

## Approach

It is proposed to use BTS consultants who developed our current Tourism Growth Plan, to review our existing work and to create a new Tourism Growth Plan for 2025-2030. A draft brief has been developed for this work (see Appendix 1).

## Project Governance

The project brief, set out in Appendix 1, will be delivered by BTS with review meetings held with a Project Team at the end of each stage, to include:

- BTS (consultant)
- Luke Raddon Jackson (SRO)
- Phill Turner (Lead Officer)
- Nadia Alam & Kirsty Beauchamp (Tourism Officer – job share)
- Economic Development Team representative

## Resources, Costs & Savings

No additional budget is required. The total project cost (£8k) is already included in the existing Tourism Growth Plan budget.

## Sensitivities, Risks & Dependencies

The following issues have been identified as potential risks:

### 1) Ability of BTS to deliver on the brief

This is considered low-risk as BTS have a track record of delivering similar work for BDC in the past and for other local authorities.

### 2) Support from local Tourism businesses

This is considered low-risk as the Tourism Partnership continues to grow with local Tourism businesses supporting the current plan and keen to develop a new one.

### 3) Level of resource available to deliver the future Tourism Growth Plan

Consideration should be given as to the level of resource available to support the future Tourism Growth Plan, this will help the Project Team to design an Action Plan accordingly. The current resource is an operational budget of £142,750 across the five years, along with 1x full time officer (Scale 5). Options / principles include:

- Increase the existing budget
- Maintain the existing budget
- Reduce the existing budget

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Considerations

This report does not adversely affect equality, diversity or inclusion.

Version Number:	Prepared By:	Approved By:	Date:
1.0	Phill Turner	Luke Raddon Jackson	

## Appendix 1

### Draft Brief to develop the Tourism Growth Plan 2025-2030

#### Stage 1 - Review

- i. Review the 5 Tourism Priorities and their progress:
  - Products & Experiences: in line with market needs and opportunities create and develop new and existing products and experiences targeted at the needs and expectations of current and future visitors.
  - Marketing & Promotion: Promoting Blaby District's image and offers to local, domestic and international visitors to attract a larger share of existing and new, year-round markets.
  - Business & People Skills Development: We will support tourism operators to develop the business and people skills needed for the industry to be more competitive and innovative in a competitive marketplace.
  - Visitor Experience: We will develop a seamless visitor service excellence culture, capacity and capability to provide an exceptional visitor experience to create lasting positive memories that compels visitors to return and recommend Blaby District to others, making Blaby District the most welcoming Leicestershire destination.
  - Partnerships and Collaboration: We will strengthen the role of the Blaby District Tourism Partnership building new kinds of partnership working across public and private sector tourism interests to deliver the Growth Plan's ambition and targets.
- ii. Review of the current Marketing Plan, our progress to date and evaluating associated objectives.
- iii. Evaluate the latest tourism STEAM Data (2022/23) to compare the district's performance over the period of the current Growth Plan and benchmark with other high performing authority areas.
- iv. Align the plan with the Economic Development Framework and the sector's key role in creating Pride in Place.

#### Stage 2 – Engagement

- Meet with the Chair and Vice Chair of Blaby District Tourism Partnership, Council Portfolio Holder and BDC Executive Director to assess what has worked well and where improvements might be considered.
- Review with the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Tourism Manager to identify successful actions and upcoming opportunities for Blaby District in the wider Leicester and Leicestershire tourism plans.

#### Stage 3 - Workshops

- Blaby District Tourism Partnership Industry Workshop: a workshop open to anyone connected to tourism in Blaby District, including businesses, community groups and volunteers. The workshop will be an opportunity to review what has been delivered through the Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan and to look at current challenges and priorities to help shape action plans for the upcoming years.

#### **Stage 4 – New Draft Tourism Growth Plan**

- Fully costed plan
- A summary of the findings from the consultations and workshop
- Following the consultations and workshop write up the draft Growth Plan including, the key objectives and emerging priorities.
- Presentation of draft Growth Plan to Informal Cabinet for awareness and feedback.
- Presentation of draft Growth Plan to the Tourism Partnership for feedback, refinement and commitment from Stakeholders.
- Present to Scrutiny.

#### **Stage 5 – Final Tourism Growth Plan**

- Updated Tourism Growth Plan Document 2025-2030 and Action Plan following feedback on the draft (stage 4).
- Create Infographic / Growth Plan Overview to support local engagement.
- Executive summary providing an overview of the new Growth Plan.
- Presentation of the Growth Plan to Cabinet for approval.