

**Blaby District Council**  
**Tourism Growth Plan**  
**2025 - 2030**

BTS January 2025

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## 1. Setting the scene

Tourism plays a vital role in Blaby District, driving economic growth, supporting local businesses and jobs, and enriching community life. It strengthens the District's image as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest. Tourism also fosters pride among residents through vibrant visitor engagement with local shops, restaurants, and events.

The Tourism Growth Plan 2025-2030 builds on past successes, presenting a strategic framework for sustainable growth. This plan is designed to maximise the economic, social, and cultural benefits of tourism within the District, whilst encouraging innovation across the visitor economy, particularly for businesses offering products, services, and experiences, as well as those integral to the supply chain.

The plan, developed with input from partners, stakeholders, and local businesses, adopts an evidence-based, market-focused approach to growth opportunities and market trends. It addresses current economic challenges and aligns with local, regional and national strategies to ensure a cohesive direction for Blaby District's tourism sector.

The Blaby District Tourism Partnership will play a key role in implementing this plan, which includes an actionable implementation plan with specific steps for the coming years.

Joint working will be crucial for delivering targets, tracking progress and maintaining the flexibility needed to adapt to evolving trends, policies, economic pressures and other challenges as the sector continues to evolve and grow.

## 2. Blaby District tourism (visitor) economy

Considerable achievements and development of the Blaby District visitor economy have been achieved since the last Tourism Growth Plan was commissioned in 2019. These achievements were made against the backdrop of the Covid pandemic.

A summary of achievements from the previous plan include:

- The development of Visit Blaby District branding, the website and social media channels – at the end of 2024 there were over 53,000 website views, and almost 5,000 followers collectively on the social media channels
- Tourism information wall at Fosse Park – highlighting attractions on the mural and displaying promotional material on a TV screen
- Working in partnership with Visit Leicester – the Blaby District Tourism plan has led to successful collaborations in several of Visit Leicester's regional campaigns, including: Uncover the Story, Fitcation and Taste the Place
- Bouskell Park Ice House restoration and tours – The 'Buried Bouskell' project restored the Ice House and helped preserve its structure and heritage for the future. A children's trail has also been launched, expanding the District's visitor demographic
- Fosse Foxes trail – promoting popular visitor attractions in the District and tied in with the foxes at Fosse Park with the launch of the new extension and food central area
- Blaby District map and guide featuring attractions, accommodation and places to eat
- 12 Blaby District Heritage Walking Trails were created to discover more about the history of the area and tie in in local attractions
- Blaby District Tourism Partnership – a driving force in delivering and supporting the Growth Plan, currently has over 70 members and includes a diverse cross section of businesses

### 2.1 Our visitors

Blaby District's tourism largely originates from the domestic English staycation market, the wider Midlands region day visitor market and local residents. Market-share of wider

international, higher-spending visitors to the District is currently low. However, the close proximity to Birmingham International and East Midlands International Airports provides access to near-European markets and a potential for growth.

Visit England uses a variety of methods to segment the market for tourism. Visit England identified five Visitor Segments. Three of these segments offer the most relevant descriptions for visitors to Blaby District. They are:

1. **Country-Loving Traditionalists:** empty nesters with traditional values, they are likely to have recently taken a countryside break in England. Good quality, secure accommodation is a priority when booking a holiday.
2. **Aspirational Family Fun:** typically, information-hungry, London-based high earners with children at home, they regularly take city breaks where they can indulge in active, family-friendly pursuits, such as sporting events and cultural visits.
3. **Free and Easy Mini-Breakers:** more likely than other segments to be 'young, free and single'. Demographically close to 'the average Joe', but they really stand out in their holiday behaviour.

Individual tourism businesses may choose to focus on one, some or all these segments, while others may focus on particular niche markets depending on their particular service, product and experience.

## 2.2 Visitors, value and volume

Blaby District is starting from a strong foundation. The table below provides a snapshot of the data and clearly demonstrates how important tourism is to Blaby District. The key indicators of visits, value and tourism jobs are showing increases providing a strong base for continued growth.

Tourism Stats Blaby District 2019 - 2023 <sup>1</sup>					
	2019	2020 <sup>2</sup>	2021	2022	2023
Visitor Numbers Day (million)	3.07	1.17	2.59	2.67	2.7
Visitor Numbers Staying (000s)	335.34	117.31	213.66	337.39	344.65
Visitor Numbers Total (million)	3.41	1.28	2.81	3.01	3.04
Total Economic Impact (£m)	£178.39	£68.60	£150.68	£190.31	£216.84
Employment (FTE)	2047	812	1606	1908	2058

## 2.3 Benefits of Blaby District investment in tourism

The latest available figures show that in 2023 tourism contributed £216.84 million annually to the District's economy and supported over 2,000 local jobs. It is acknowledged as a key driver of economic growth and represents one of Blaby District's major opportunities to enhance its profile and reputation as a place to live, visit and invest in.

<sup>1</sup> Source – Blaby District Steam Reports 2019 – 2023

<sup>2</sup> COVID Impact on tourism

There is also recognition that a thriving tourism industry can generate important social benefits which include increased civic pride, a sense of belonging, as well as wellness and self-belief for local people and visitors.

The benefits of Blaby District Council investing in tourism are:

- **Economic and social impact:** strengthens a vibrant visitor economy that benefits the community
- **Job support:** helps sustain over 2,000 hospitality and tourism jobs within the District
- **Innovation and investment:** encourages continuous innovation and attracts new investments
- **Multiplier effect:** boosts other industries by supporting the local supply chain
- **Increased awareness:** raises Blaby District's profile among residents and a broader audience
- **Health, wellbeing and community engagement:** enhances quality of life and fosters community involvement
- **Positive ROI:** generates a strong return on investment through economic and social gains

## 2.4 Strategic context

This plan aligns with other key plans and strategies in Blaby District, supporting wider growth ambitions that share many aims and objectives in common.

The Tourism Growth Plan is in keeping with a commitment to partnership and collaboration, this is embedded in its wider strategic context. It is informed by, dovetails with, and will contribute to the delivery of existing and emerging national and local strategies. Examples of which are highlighted below.

### Local

Blaby District Council

- Blaby District Plan 2024-2028
- Economic Development Framework
- Active Travel Strategy
- Blaby District Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Community, Health and Well-Being Plan
- Commercial Strategy

### Regional

- The Business and Skills Partnership Economic Growth Strategy for 2021-2030
- Leicestershire Local Visitor Economy Partnership Growth Plan (in development)

### National

- Visit England's Regenerative Tourism Strategy (in development)

## 3. The ambition for 2030

The ambition is clear and builds on the original Growth Plan:

"Blaby District will be a welcoming and sustainable destination, showcasing its heritage, natural beauty and local character. By creating memorable experiences and supporting local

businesses, we will build a thriving tourism economy that benefits visitors, residents and future generations."

This vision reflects Blaby District Council's commitment to creating an outstanding visitor experience that balances growth with sustainability. The focus is on welcoming all visitors, showcasing Blaby District's unique offerings, and building a thriving tourism environment that benefits both visitors and the local community.

To achieve this ambition, efforts must concentrate on creating and nurturing conditions that enable the visitor economy to thrive.

The following strategic priorities will guide these efforts:

**Priority 1** - Inspire visitors to come, stay longer, and explore further

**Priority 2** - Support local businesses to succeed

**Priority 3** - Champion regenerative and sustainable tourism practices

**Priority 4** - Grow and enhance our partnerships to deliver growth through collaboration

**Priority 5** - Explore infrastructure and accessibility to create an inclusive environment

The approach to deliver these is outlined in the next section.

## 4. Our Tourism Growth Plan priorities

### 4.1 Priority 1 - Inspire visitors to come, stay longer, and explore further

A destination's appeal lies in its unique identity, sense of place, and memorable experiences. Since its launch, the Visit Blaby District brand has made significant progress in raising the District's profile and increasing awareness through a dedicated website, social media channels, and targeted campaigns. These efforts have generated significant online traffic and reach, drawing attention to Blaby District's offerings. However, there remains a need to further enhance the District's visibility and attract both new and returning visitors within a competitive tourism market.

#### 4.1.1 Develop the destination position and profile

Positioning of the District must captivate and engage visitors, encouraging them not only to come but to fully experience the District's offerings. By inspiring longer stays and more extensive exploration, Blaby District can deepen visitor engagement, boost the local economy, and enhance the District's reputation. This priority focuses on actions that highlight Blaby District's appeal, showcase its visitor offer, and create a memorable visitor experience. There is alignment with Blaby District's wider place making and narrative development, anchoring the tourism plan with community ambitions.

The destination branding and marketing needs to take into consideration the following:

- **Develop a destination storyline:** create a cohesive narrative that weaves Blaby District's history, heritage, people, landscapes, and modern attractions into a compelling story. This storyline should inform everything from digital content to brochures and can be reflected in campaigns across various platforms.
- **Marketing:** create consistent campaigns that are engaging and directed at our target markets. Build awareness of Blaby District as a visitor destination and ensure that visitors have all the information they need to inspire them, both prior to arrival, and whilst they are here.
- **Create a compelling narrative:** develop storytelling campaigns that bring Blaby District's history, landscapes, and local traditions to life. This can include spotlights on local personalities, traditions, and the unique "sense of place" that defines Blaby District.

- **Pride in place:** develop a collective marketing approach with key target markets and segments to attract spending visitors who stay longer. With clear and consistent messaging by all partners, Blaby District can increase its profile as a destination with plenty to do and see.
- **Digital:** the core destination marketing role will be via the Visit Blaby website and the social media channels, providing the platform to build Blaby District's reputation and for individual operators to use. This should include:
  - **Interactive events calendar:** create an interactive events calendar where visitors can easily see upcoming events, view details, and mark their calendars. Highlight seasonal and signature events that are key draws to Blaby District and emphasise community festivals and cultural activities.
  - **Experience listings:** ensure all visitor experiences are well-documented with detailed descriptions, photos, visitor reviews, and essential information such as hours of operation, accessibility features, and location maps. Highlight experiences unique to Blaby District, appealing to visitors looking for authentic and memorable activities that are bookable.
  - **Enhanced visual and multimedia content:** incorporate videos, photo galleries, and other rich media to capture the energy and atmosphere of Blaby District's events. Dynamic content can help visitors visualise themselves at the event, making them more likely to attend.
  - **Generate user-generated content:** showcase authentic experiences by inviting visitors and locals to share their own experiences through photo contests, hashtags, and testimonials, building a community-driven "Sense of Place" online. This creates a powerful, organic promotion that resonates with prospective visitors.
  - **Partner with influencers and content creators:** engage regional influencers, bloggers, and photographers who align with Blaby District's brand to share their experiences and reach new audiences, especially those interested in travel, culture, and outdoor adventures.
  - **Destination toolkit:** develop a toolkit for local tourism businesses with narrative and visualisation, how to use them, video and images, copy examples etc as a resource for tourism businesses and operators to use.

#### 4.1.2 Develop the visitor offer and experience

Visitors today seek destinations that celebrate their distinct identity and sense of place. A key aim of the growth plan is to support, develop and promote authentic local experiences that connect visitors to its history, people, and culture while supporting the local hospitality and tourism businesses that bring these experiences to life.

##### Visitor offer and experience development focus

Blaby District's visitor offer will focus on areas where it already has a strong foundation. These include walking, cycling, water-based activities, culture and heritage, food and drink, and events. By building on these established strengths, Blaby District can ensure a cohesive and appealing tourism offering.

##### The Tourism Growth Plan propositions

The Tourism Growth Plan will focus on five propositions to enhance the Blaby District offer. These are:

- Experiences
- Events / festivals
- Regional food and drink



- d. Blue and green spaces
- e. History and heritage

#### a. Experiences

Memorable experiences are created when visitors engage meaningfully with a destination's heritage, culture and tourism offer.

The focus should be on supporting tourism businesses and providing opportunities to collaborate and create inspirational itineraries. This will help form a diverse and appealing portfolio of experiences that tell the District's story.

The experience proposition for the District might include:

- **Cultural and historical tours:** Guided experiences that explore Blaby District's heritage sites, local stories, and historical landmarks, allowing visitors to connect with the area's past and its cultural roots.
- **Food and drink trails:** curated culinary experiences featuring local restaurants, cafes, breweries, and farm shops. These trails would highlight Blaby District's regional flavours and promote local producers, giving visitors a true taste of the area.
- **Outdoor activities:** nature-based experiences such as guided walks, cycling tours, and canal boat rides that showcase Blaby District's blue and green spaces. These activities invite visitors to enjoy the area's scenic landscapes and natural beauty in an immersive way.
- **Hands-on workshops and artisan experiences:** interactive workshops, such as crafts, food preparation, and agricultural experiences, which allow visitors to learn from local artisans and experience the area's traditional practices firsthand.
- **Story-driven tours:** themed tours that tell the unique stories of Blaby District through various lenses, whether it's historical, ecological, or culinary. These storytelling experiences connect visitors to the soul of the District in a way that is both informative and entertaining.
- **Family friendly:** family-friendly experiences that cater to visitors of all ages, making it an ideal destination for families looking to explore, learn, and enjoy quality time together.

#### b. Events and festivals

Events are recognised as a driver of tourism in Blaby District, serving as a compelling draw for visitors and enriching their experience by providing connections to the local culture. For residents, these events and festivals offer a unique opportunity to celebrate their heritage and foster a sense of community.

Events and festivals contribute positively in three main ways:

- **Attracting visitors:** high-profile and community-based events bring tourists into the region, boosting visitor numbers and local spending
- **Enhancing the District's image:** events help shape a vibrant, dynamic image of Blaby District as an engaging destination, appealing to both new and returning visitors
- **Supporting community cohesion:** festivals and events foster a sense of pride and connection within local communities, celebrating shared values and traditions

Blaby District has a varied event calendar, featuring large-scale attractions like Cosby Yarn Bomb, the Victory Show, Glastonblaby, and Lubbfest, alongside smaller arts, cultural, and community events. This mix of large and smaller gatherings provides options for a wide audience, enhancing the area's reputation as a lively destination with something for everyone.



With a proactive approach, Blaby District's event sector can expand its reach and impact, making events a cornerstone of the District's tourism offer and enhancing the overall appeal and sustainability of Blaby District as a destination.

### **Strengthening the local events sector**

A priority of the Tourism Growth Plan is to support and develop a vibrant local events sector. The plan aims to facilitate and build the capacity of event organisers, helping them to create high-quality, sustainable events that draw visitors and add value to the local economy.

#### **c. Regional food and drink**

Blaby District's reputation for food and drink has flourished in recent years, offering an increasingly variety of opportunities for visitors to taste, experience, and connect with the region's larder. Building on Leicestershire's "Taste the Place" campaign, the aim is to further elevate and promote the food and drink offerings.

While food and drink may not be the primary reason for visiting Blaby District, it significantly enriches every visitor's experience, whether they're here for a day trip or an extended stay. Exceptional food and drink experiences contribute to visitors' satisfaction and lasting impressions, as food is one shared experience that appeals to all.

#### **Growing Blaby District's food and drink tourism**

The Tourism Growth Plan emphasises the importance of supporting the local tourism industry to source and showcase local produce. Key priorities include:

- **Promoting authentic flavours:** encouraging businesses to use local ingredients in their offerings, creating a true taste of Blaby District for visitors
- **Developing unique food experiences:** explore pop-ups, street food events, and culinary festivals to animate urban spaces and attract both locals and tourists
- **Creating connections across the region:** using food and drink as a vehicle to link Blaby District's diverse landscapes and communities, creating / supporting food trails or events that showcases the area's larder and cultural heritage

#### **d. Blue and green spaces aligning with regenerative tourism**

Enhancing Blaby District's walking and cycling paths aligns strongly with regenerative tourism principles. Regenerative tourism goes beyond simply minimising environmental impact; it actively contributes to improving and restoring the destination's natural and cultural assets. By expanding and promoting green routes and canal towpaths, the District supports eco-friendly, low-impact travel that encourages visitors to engage with local landscapes and communities.

Encouraging walking and cycling instead of car travel reduces carbon emissions, improves air quality, and preserves the tranquillity of natural areas. Additionally, creating well-connected trails can drive economic benefits by increasing foot traffic to local businesses and attractions while fostering health and well-being for both residents and visitors.

This approach enriches the visitor experience by providing immersive ways to explore Blaby District's cultural and natural heritage, fostering a sense of stewardship and connection to the landscape. It also supports community well-being through improved accessibility and recreational options, ensuring the District's blue and green spaces continue to thrive for future generations.

Priorities include:

- **Community engagement:** involve residents in trail upkeep, conservation projects, and educational programs

- **Sustainability efforts:** promote "leave no trace" principles and support eco-friendly rentals like e-bikes
- **Inclusive access:** ensure trails accommodate all visitors with accessible paths, parking, and rest areas
- **Monitor and improve:** collect visitor feedback and data to refine and assess trail usage and benefits

#### e. History and heritage

Blaby District is rich in history and cultural heritage and offers unique tourism experiences. Visitors can enjoy heritage sites like the Ice House, Everards Brewery, and the Grand Union Canal, which showcase the District's cultural and economic legacy. The District's parks, historic churches, and conservation areas provide scenic backdrops for immersive experiences such as heritage walks, guided tours, and cultural events. Ongoing conservation efforts celebrate and protect the District's historical identity, creating engaging attractions for both residents and tourists.

Priorities include:

- **Restoration of sites:** support restoration and maintenance of key sites and explore digitisation of local records for public access
- **Enhance storytelling:** create heritage trails, interactive tours, and thematic events to share local history
- **Community engagement:** explore workshops, volunteer programs, and heritage ambassador initiatives
- **Heritage-tourism integration:** collaborate with businesses to develop history-themed experiences and regional heritage trails
- **Promotion and outreach:** share high-quality content and partner with influencers to showcase the District's heritage

## 4.2 Priority 2 - Supporting local businesses to succeed

Continued support to operators in building the essential business and people skills needed for a competitive and innovative edge in the marketplace is needed to strengthen Blaby District's tourism sector. Recruiting and retaining skilled and motivated individuals remains a challenge, so positioning tourism as a desirable career choice is vital. Improving employment conditions and career advancement opportunities, we aim to make tourism a fair, inclusive, and attractive sector, especially for young people.

Key priorities include:

- **Capitalising on government and local initiatives:** working with partners such as the Business and Skills Partnership leveraging available funding, training, and support opportunities
- **Educational partnerships:** building connections with educational institutions to foster awareness and skills for tourism careers at all levels
- **Supporting apprenticeships:** working with partners to encourage local tourism businesses to offer hands-on learning and career pathways within the sector
- **Peer learning and mentoring:** encouraging knowledge-sharing and mentoring to build industry resilience and expertise
- **Business development initiatives:** working with partners develop a needs-driven program of business support ensuring tourism businesses know the resources available and can easily access relevant support

### 4.3 Priority 3 - Champion regenerative and sustainable tourism practices

Blaby District Council's aim is to make the District a sustainable and responsible destination for visitors. To achieve this the focus will be on regenerative tourism<sup>3</sup> practices, ensuring that tourism actively contributes to the health of the District's natural and cultural resources. This approach will support biodiversity, encourage conservation efforts, and contribute to the long-term resilience of area's landscapes and communities.

Regenerative tourism goes beyond sustainability, aiming to restore, enhance, and give back to the places and people involved, creating a tourism experience that benefits both visitors and residents alike.

#### 4.3.1 Regenerative tourism

Regenerative tourism focuses on practices that leave the District better than before, encouraging visitors and businesses to actively participate in preserving natural resources, cultural heritage, and community well-being. This approach supports a tourism economy that strengthens the environment, local culture, and quality of life for residents.

Priorities include:

- **Sustainable tourism practices:** focusing on protecting green spaces, waterways, and heritage sites
- **Eco-friendly travel:** promoting options such as cycling and walking routes, minimising environmental impact, and encouraging responsible visitor behaviour
- **Enhancing blue and green spaces:** exploring trails, waterways, and green spaces to support biodiversity, reduce pollution, and improve access
- **Supporting local businesses and artisans:** encouraging tourists to engage with local businesses, such as family-owned shops, farms, and artisans
- **Community-led experiences:** work with residents to create community-led experiences that allow visitors to connect authentically with Blaby District's culture

#### 4.3.2 Blue and green spaces

The District's rural landscape, waterways, and canals offer ideal settings for outdoor activities. The network of walking and cycling paths is a key asset of the District's tourism infrastructure, benefiting both visitors and residents. There is significant potential for these paths and trails to generate a wide range of economic, social, health, and environmental benefits.

Connecting the area's towns, villages, and attractions with walking and cycling routes encourages travel that respects the environment while enriching the visitor experience. By promoting these trails, Blaby District can encourage longer visits and deeper exploration.

The strategic priority will be:

- A focus on the development and expansion of new or existing walking and cycling routes, including canal towpaths, to connect key attractions and encourage exploration of Blaby District's natural and cultural sites

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<sup>3</sup> A priority identified in the emerging VisitEngland Regenerative Tourism Strategy

#### 4.4 Priority 4 - Grow and enhance our partnerships to deliver growth through collaboration

Partnerships and collaboration are essential to building a sustainable tourism sector that benefits both visitors and the local community. Working together with businesses, community organisations, and regional tourism bodies, will amplify the tourism offer, strengthen the local economy, and create memorable, authentic experiences. By fostering partnerships, the District can maximise resources, align goals, and build a cohesive destination that appeals to a wide range of visitors.

Collaborative tourism efforts allow Blaby District to unite its diverse offerings, ranging from scenic blue and green spaces to vibrant cultural events, under a single, strong identity. Through partnerships, the District can reach broader audiences, support local businesses, and provide unique, high-quality experiences that encourage repeat visits. Additionally, collaboration enables Blaby District Council to prioritise sustainable practices that protect natural and cultural assets, ensuring tourism growth benefits the community long-term.

##### 4.4.1 Collaborative partnerships:

Key areas of focus for partnerships and collaboration in Blaby District:

- **The Blaby District Tourism Partnership:** an extremely effective collaborative network of local tourism businesses, community groups, Blaby District Council and Visit Leicester. The partnership can maximise resources, align goals, and build a cohesive destination that appeals to a wide range of visitors and enable Blaby District to compete more effectively as a unique and attractive destination within the wider Leicestershire region.
- **Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP):** Blaby District Council is a partner in the Leicester and Leicestershire LVEP. Visit England is creating a portfolio of nationally supported, strategic Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs). The new LVEPs aim to work in collaboration on shared priorities and targets. Blaby District Council's role is to support and grow the visitor economy through robust destination management, strong stakeholder relationships and clear planning.
- **Visit Leicester/neighbouring districts:** working with Visit Leicester and neighbouring districts to create cross-boundary experiences. This could include heritage trails, food and drink trails, or outdoor activity routes, encouraging tourists to explore more of the Leicestershire region.
- **Joint promotional efforts:** align with broader regional campaigns to highlight Blaby District as a key destination within Leicestershire. Participating in initiatives like "Taste the Place" or county-wide events broaden Blaby District's reach and enhances its visibility within the regional tourism network.
- **Community engagement projects:** engage residents and volunteers in tourism initiatives, such as nature conservation efforts, cultural workshops, and guided tours. Community participation ensures tourism development aligns with local values and enhances resident pride.

#### 4.5 Priority 5 - Explore infrastructure and accessibility to create an inclusive environment

Blaby District is strategically positioned as a gateway to Leicester and the broader Leicestershire region, with excellent connectivity by road, rail, and proximity to Birmingham International and East Midlands Airports.

While local improvements can be developed decisions around service expansion and major transportation initiatives are beyond the scope of this plan. Tourism priorities to be

considered are for improvements to key areas of connectivity, signage, trails, accommodation, and accessibility:

#### 4.5.1 Infrastructure

- **Improve local connectivity:** while most visitors will likely continue to arrive by car, exploring options for improving linkages to have better connectivity with road, rail, and the park and ride would reduce environmental impact, and create a more enjoyable and accessible experience for all visitors. As would alternatives like rental bikes, electronic charging points, local small-scale tours, shuttle buses and other imaginative solutions that can lead to longer stays and more enjoyable experiences. These activities will be taken forward in partnership with local businesses, community groups and statutory agencies.
- **Signage:** explore signage across the District and identify opportunities for improvement where possible.
- **Public realm:** support the enhancement of public spaces across Blaby District which will create a welcoming, vibrant environment for visitors and also create the right environment for potential private sector investment. For example, accommodation, local facilities, and public art and interactive installations.
- **Accommodation:** a diverse range of quality accommodations is essential to attract target markets and increase overnight stays in Blaby District. As identified in the 2023 Visitor Accommodation Study, currently there is a very limited supply of hotel and visitor accommodation (including self-catering, camping, glamping pods, motorhome aires<sup>4</sup>). The review of Blaby District Local Plan provides the opportunity for a strategic approach to consider the accommodation development for which potential has been identified, and if not to amend these or introduce new policies that can help realise these developments.

#### 4.5.2 Accessibility

- The 'purple pound'<sup>5</sup> estimated spend is £15.3 billion annually within the UK visitor economy by disabled individuals and represents a substantial market opportunity. There is an opportunity to position Blaby District as an accessible destination for all, catering to visible and non-visible disabilities and capitalising on the "purple pound" market opportunity. This will require developing an Accessibility Plan that provides a roadmap for improving both business-level and destination-wide accessibility.

This could include:

- **Destination-wide accessibility improvements:** explore accessibility enhancements at key attractions, trails, and public spaces, such as ramps, tactile signs, and accessible parking
- **Training and support for local businesses:** signpost resources and training to help businesses understand and implement accessible practices, such as sensory-friendly accommodations and services
- **Digital accessibility:** ensure the Visit Blaby District website and digital resources are fully accessible to users with disabilities, with features such as screen reader compatibility and clear navigation

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<sup>4</sup> Motorhome aires are designated parking areas, where motorhomes can stay overnight, typically for a small fee or free of charge.

<sup>5</sup> The "purple pound" represents the spending power of disabled people and their families.

## 5. Monitoring performance and implementation

### 5.1 Monitoring the tourism performance

Monitoring tourism performance is critical to assessing the success of initiatives and ensuring sustainable growth. To achieve this, Blaby District Council will use the STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) to monitor the insights into the District's tourism performance.

### 5.2 Measuring success

The Growth Plan will be measured against the performance of Blaby District as a visitor destination. Blaby District Council subscribes to STEAM<sup>6</sup> tourism data a model that measures the economic impact of tourism on a local area. The model uses data from local sources, such as hotels, attractions etc to estimate the number of visitors, revenue<sup>7</sup>, and jobs supported by tourism. From this, success can be measured by an increase in the following metrics.

Target Measure	Target Increase	How Measured	Baseline*	By 2030
Total economic impact (£m)	10%	STEAM DATA	£216.84	£238.52
Visitor numbers total (million)	10%	STEAM DATA	3.04	3.34

Supplementary Measure	Measure	How Measured
Visitor numbers day (million)	Monitor annually	STEAM DATA
Visitor numbers staying (000s)	Monitor annually	STEAM DATA
Employment (FTE)	Monitor annually	STEAM DATA
Sector growth (% increase in visitor spend in Blaby District compared to Leicestershire)	Monitor annually	STEAM DATA

The target aimed for is a 10% increase in economic impact and a 10% increase in visitor numbers over the duration of the plan. However, these will be monitored annually. We will have the end target measure for 2030 in place and can then track progress each year. Our benchmark figure is based on the last set of STEAM data from 2023.

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<sup>6</sup> Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor.

\*All figures based on 2023 (not including inflation).

Working closely with partners the ambition is to achieve a steady increase in the number of people employed in the sector, encouraging new entrants to the workforce and upskilling within businesses.

### 5.3 Implementation

The delivery of the Growth Plan will be led by Blaby District Council in collaboration with key strategic partners, including the Blaby District Tourism Partnership, Visit Leicester/LVEP, and the Business and Skills Partnership. This collaborative approach ensures coordinated efforts across various sectors to enhance the destination experience and improve marketing strategies.

Successful implementation of the Growth Plan relies on the following resources:

- **Tourism budget:** as detailed in the action plan, funding will be allocated to support key initiatives
- **Tourism and Heritage officer:** this role will provide essential support to drive implementation and ensure the plan's objectives are met