

Blaby District Council

Cabinet Executive

Date of Meeting	24 February 2025
Title of Report	Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan This is a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan.
Lead Member	Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore - Health, Leisure, Climate and Economic Development
Report Author	Health, Leisure & Tourism Service Manager
Strategic Themes	Growing and supporting our economy

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 To update Members on the work undertaken by the Tourism and Heritage Team, and the Blaby District Tourism Partnership, to develop a new Tourism Growth Plan for 2025-2030. The work with partners has included the production of an Action Plan that outlines how the priorities within the Growth Plan will be delivered throughout the District.

2. Recommendation(s) to Cabinet Executive

- 2.1 To acknowledge the achievements of the previous Tourism Growth Plan.
- 2.2 To approve the Tourism Growth Plan 2025-2030 and associated Action Plan.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 To maximise the local growth opportunity for Tourism and to support economic growth in this area.
- 3.2 To provide the appropriate level of resources to deliver the Tourism Growth Plan & Action Plan.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

Tourism plays a vital role in Blaby District, driving economic growth, supporting local businesses and jobs, and enriching community life for both residents and visitors. It represents one of Blaby District's major opportunities to enhance its profile and reputation as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest in.

Since the existing Tourism Growth Plan for 2020-2025 was commissioned in 2019, there have been considerable achievements and development of the Blaby District visitor economy, despite the backdrop of the Covid pandemic.

The latest available figures show that in 2023 tourism contributed £216.84m annually to the District's economy and supported over 2,000 local jobs.

A summary of achievements from the previous plan include:

- Visit Blaby District branding, website and social media channels – at the end of 2024 there were over 53K 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 Growth Plan has led to successful collaborations in several of Visit Leicester's regional campaigns which include: 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 launched, expanding the District's visitor demographic.
- Fosse Foxes trail – promoting popular visitor attractions across the District and tied in with the foxes at Fosse Park.
- Blaby District map and guide featuring attractions, accommodation and places to eat.
- 12 Blaby District Heritage Walking Trails created to discover more about the history of the area and tying in local attractions.
- Blaby District Tourism Partnership - a driving force in delivering and supporting the Growth Plan. The Partnership currently has over 70 members and includes a diverse cross section of businesses.

Developing the new Tourism Growth Plan has been one of the priorities of the Tourism Partnership and Tourism and Heritage Team for the last few months. The production of the new Growth Plan has been supported by Business Tourism Solutions (BTS), an independent, sector expert. During this time the new Government have implemented a series of policy changes which will influence the Tourism Growth Plan. These include increases to National Insurance contributions for businesses and the proposals regarding local government reorganisation. These national policy changes have been considered and reflected within the way the new plan will be delivered.

The new growth plan has been developed with input from partners, stakeholders, and local businesses. This has involved extensive consultation via desktop research and analysis, workshops, online surveys and 1-2-1 interviews. Elected Members have also contributed to the plans content through engagement with a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

The Growth Plan aligns with and supports the Blaby District Plan 2024 – 2028 and the Economic Development Framework to help achieve the vision that Blaby District is a great place to visit. It is key to 'growing and supporting our economy' through increasing visitor numbers and their spending power in the District. It also plays a pivotal role in the Active Travel Strategy, and Community, Health and Wellbeing Plan, making the District a welcoming and sustainable destination for residents and visitors.

The Blaby District Tourism Partnership will fulfil a key role in implementing and driving forward the new Growth Plan. The Partnership will oversee delivery of the Action Plan and provide resources to enable delivery of our district priorities over the life span of the new growth plan.

The success of the plan will be measured with a series of outcomes. The Tourism team will oversee monitoring of these outcomes and will provide regular briefings to Members and the Tourism Partnership. These measures can be seen in Appendix C.

The new Tourism Growth Plan sets out the following ambition:

"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."

To achieve the 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

These five strategic priorities provide the framework for the Tourism Growth Action Plan 2025-2030. The Action Plan includes a wide range initiatives that will help us achieve our priorities. These include:

- A social media strategy.
- Creative marketing campaigns and toolkit.

- Collaboration with schools to explore student placements/internships.
- Developing and expanding new or existing walking and cycling routes.
- Growing the Tourism Partnership and facilitate collaborations.
- Exploring tourism opportunities within green spaces and on waterways.
- Supporting tourism businesses with recruitment and skills challenges including the impact of national living wage increase.

Benefits from the proposed approach will include:

- Providing a clear direction for local tourism.
- Uniting the local tourism sector.
- Raising the profile of the Blaby District.
- Delivering significant economic growth.
- Providing greater opportunity to secure external funding.
- Supporting the successful delivery of the Blaby Plan and Economic Development Framework.
- Supporting the Active Travel Strategy, and Community, Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Aligning with the Leicestershire Local Visitor Economy Partnership Growth Plan, which is currently in development.

A copy of the Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan 2025-2030, and the supporting Action Plan, are available in the appendices

4.2 Proposal(s)

Building upon the success of the last Tourism Growth Plan, and the strength of the Blaby Tourism Partnership, Cabinet are asked to approve the new Tourism Growth Plan 2025-2030. The new plan will provide clear direction for tourism growth across the district.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

There has been extensive engagement with stakeholders to ensure buy in to the proposed plan. This has included:

- 1-2-1 meetings with key Tourism businesses and stakeholders.
- Tourism Growth Plan workshops.
- Leicester City Council & Leicestershire County Council Strategic Tourism Manager.
- Online surveys with local businesses and partners.
- Scrutiny Task and Finish Group (15 October 2024).

4.4 Significant Issues

In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities and there are no areas of concern.

5. Environmental impact

- 5.1 No Net Zero and Climate Impact Assessment (NZCIA) is required for this report.

6. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 6.1 In continuation of the previous Tourism Growth Plan, £28,000 per year is allocated within the budget to deliver the 2025-2030 Tourism Growth Action Plan. This amount has been included within the Cabinet budget paper for approval. The funding will ensure that the Council can provide the necessary resources to drive forward the Plan's initiatives and maintain momentum from the preceding strategy.

Additionally, members of the Blaby Tourism Partnership will provide support to deliver the Plan. The Council's Tourism and heritage team will also seek funding opportunities throughout the period of the plan to secure investment and resources to contribute towards delivery of the plans priorities.

7. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

- 7.1 The following risks have been identified:

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Continued support of local tourism businesses and partners	The Tourism and Heritage Officer will provide capacity to build strong relationships with and between partners. The Action Plan includes work to strengthen the partnership and support local tourism businesses.
Failure to deliver the Action Plan	The Tourism and Heritage Officer will be supported by the Tourism Partnership and will be managed by the Health, Leisure and Tourism Services Manager who will ensure progress is being made.
Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation	Ongoing consultation with Visit Leicester/Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) to ensure alignment with the wider region. Participation in cross-boundary working groups will also build resilience into the Plan so it can adapt to changing structures.
National Insurance and Living Wage increases	Tourism team and Business, Work and Skills team to provide guidance and signposting for support local tourism businesses. We will also support best-practice workshops or seminars on managing wage impacts and productivity.

Competition from neighbouring or national destinations	Differentiate Blaby's unique selling points (e.g. heritage sites, green spaces, local character). Maintain regular marketing campaigns. Partner with broader tourism networks to cross-promote.
Fluctuations in consumer trends and external economic factors (e.g. inflation, fuel costs)	Adopt agile marketing strategies focusing on value experiences. Use real-time visitor data to adapt offers quickly. Diversify tourism products (e.g. cultural events, conferences, day trips)
Insufficient internal capacity or expertise	Ensure robust staff training and professional development. Promote volunteer or internship programmes (in collaboration with schools or colleges). Use external consultants on specialist projects where needed

8. Other options considered

8.1 Another option has been considered in developing this work area:

Not to develop a Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan – this option is rejected as it would not develop our local Tourism sector or maximise the growth opportunity

9. Appendix

9.1 Appendix A – Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan

9.2 Appendix B – Blaby District Tourism Action Plan

9.3 Appendix C – Tourism Growth Plan Measures – additional information

10. Background paper(s)

10.1 Tourism Growth Plan 2025-2030

10.2 Tourism Action Plan

11. Report author's contact details

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