

HEREFORDSHIRE

Destination Management Plan 2025-2035

On behalf of
Visit Herefordshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)

Partnership Building. Place Shaping. Growing Sustainably





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Please note, aligned to this Destination Management Plan, there is a separate Action Plan, detailing priorities, timings and responsibilities. To request more information on the Action Plan please contact: diane@herefordshirecountybid.co.uk

Executive Summary

This Destination Management Plan (DMP) sets out the roadmap for growing Herefordshire’s visitor economy over the next ten years, from 2025 to 2035.

The Visit Herefordshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (comprising Herefordshire County BID, Hereford BID and Herefordshire Council) will sit at the heart of this drive to grow our tourism sector. Positive and productive partnerships will be critical to delivering on the targets, including close collaboration and coordination with public agencies, private businesses, charitable organisations and neighbouring destinations.

It’s a turning point for Herefordshire as a destination. The county’s independent spirit, dynamic tourism sector, agile approach and determination to succeed will be fully harnessed to bring about transformational change to benefit our communities.

THE VISION

To cultivate a vibrant tourism sector in Herefordshire, which:

- Offers distinctive and unforgettable visitor experiences;
- Stays true to the essence of Herefordshire as a place;
- Generates diverse employment opportunities;
- Benefits our local communities and safeguards our environment and heritage;
- Is focused on increasing visitor numbers, particularly overnights, prioritising those who are inclined to spend with our local retailers and service providers.

THE TARGETS

PHASE 1
FOUNDATIONS

YEARS 1 & 2 (2025 & 2026)

Building the foundations, delivering quick wins, embedding a new model of partnership-working and piloting collaborative tourism marketing and development projects.

PHASE 2
REALISATION

YEARS 3, 4 & 5 (2027-2029)

The visitor economy will start to benefit from the initial delivery of this plan. The opening of the new Hereford Museum & Art Gallery will be of particular importance as the spotlight will be shining on the county during this period.

PHASE 3
CAPITALISATION

YEARS 6, 7, 8, 9 (2030-2034)

Accelerated economic growth.

TARGETS	ECONOMIC IMPACT	VISITOR DAYS	VISITORS - OVERNIGHT STAYS	FTE JOBS*
Current (2023)	£735m	8m	890,000	8,014
PHASE 1: FOUNDATIONS 2025 & 2026	+3% p.a.	+3% p.a.	+3% p.a.	Static
PHASE 2: REALISATION 2027 - 2029	+5% p.a.	+5% p.a.	+5% p.a.	+3% p.a.
PHASE 3: CAPITALISATION 2030 - 2034	+8% p.a.	+8% p.a.	+8% p.a.	+5% p.a.

Priority 1: Embed partnership working & advocate for the visitor

Agree and embed new models of partnership working to enable the effective delivery of this DMP, including regular review and updating of this document. Fully engage with the shared vision and focus on building a strong profile for both the LVEP and the visitor economy sector. Advocate for the visitor in all related decisions and projects such as town planning and transport infrastructure. Collect the right data to support benchmarking and support decision-making.

.....

Priority 2: Grow the volume of overnight visitors

Overnight visitors make double the contribution to our visitor economy. More accommodation, particularly hotels, is required to facilitate this growth, alongside strong year-round reasons to visit, including new bookable experiences.

.....

Priority 3: Strengthen and extend the renaissance of Hereford

Realise the potential for Hereford to be the jewel in our crown, by partnering with stakeholders to progress place shaping efforts from a tourism perspective and maximise the impact of investments such as the new Hereford Museum & Art Gallery and extension of the National Trust’s Weir Garden. Promote Hereford as a historic, green, riverside city with a thriving, contemporary experience. Look ahead to future initiatives which would enhance the city’s visitor offer.

.....

Priority 4: Reinforce the distinctive destination brand and identity

Make the most of limited resources by achieving recognition for Herefordshire across a small number of uniquely engaging differentiators. Marketing activity will centre on three-night stays, with themed seasonal itineraries and promotional partnerships used to inspire bookings.

.....

Priority 5: Drive forward a regenerative approach to tourism

Make a significant contribution to the county’s carbon zero, nature rich goals; extend a warm welcome to all and ensure tourism acts as a force for good in our local communities.

.....

Priority 6: Nurture our people and businesses

Galvanise the enthusiasm and creative thinking of the sector and provide tailored training and support to strengthen our distinctive visitor offer. Facilitate upskilling, networking and sharing of best practice amongst our providers, alongside taking action to ensure the visitor economy has access to employees with the right skills and mindset.

.....

Priority 7: Get the basics right

Focus in the first instance on transport and infrastructure services, ensure Herefordshire is easy to explore by car, public transport and on foot.

Foreword from VisitBritain

As the national tourism board for England, we are pleased to endorse this Destination Management Plan for Herefordshire.

We were delighted to award Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status to Visit Herefordshire in 2024. Since then, the LVEP has worked closely with partners and consulted widely to create this 10 year plan, with a vision to create a thriving and growing tourism sector with a focus on place shaping, good jobs, benefiting communities and the environment.

It is great to see Herefordshire moving forward with this strategic plan in its first year of being an LVEP. A key recommendation of the Government response to the de Bois Review of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) in England was the creation of the Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) programme.

Great destinations are great places to live and work as well as to visit and strong governance can drive place shaping and shift local and wider perceptions of the place which can contribute to local pride. Well run destinations can also attract new investment, increase income and create new jobs. The LVEPs work closely with us at VisitEngland and are at the heart of transforming the visitor economy landscape supporting its cohesion and growth in a more inclusive, accessible and sustainable way. The programme is going from strength to strength as the number of LVEPs increases, representing nearly all England.

We look forward to working with the Visit Herefordshire LVEP and their partners to help realise the ambitions set out in this strategy.

Andrew Stokes OBE England Director, VisitBritain



SECTION 1

Working together to drive sustainable growth of our visitor economy



Working together to drive sustainable growth of our visitor economy

This Destination Management Plan (DMP) is a joined-up vision and plan of action designed to significantly and sustainably grow Herefordshire's visitor economy over the next ten years.

Extensive research, collaboration and consultation with key stakeholders, tourism providers, policy-makers, thought-leaders and visitors has informed the shape and scope of the plan, alongside a review of comparative destinations. Over the next decade, it is robust, energetic and committed partnerships that will be critical to its success.

Our Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) will sit at the heart of this drive to grow our tourism sector. But everyone needs to play their part if we are to succeed. Public agencies, private businesses and charitable organisations alike are invited to partner, coordinate and work together to ensure this shared roadmap achieves our aligned objectives and aspirations.

There is collective ownership of this plan and collective responsibility for its delivery, which will be managed and overseen by the Visit Herefordshire LVEP Advisory Board comprising representatives from Herefordshire County Business Improvement District (BID), Hereford Business Improvement District (BID), Herefordshire Council and VisitEngland. The DMP is predicated on the basis of taking action, working collaboratively, pooling resources and committing to high quality brand promotion which brings in visitors with a propensity to spend. As circumstances change over the next ten years, this plan will be a living document, flexing and refining as required but always driving forward the sustainable growth of our visitor economy.

It is a hugely positive and exciting time for Herefordshire. As an emerging destination there is plenty to do and many opportunities to seize but only small budgets. To date, Visit Herefordshire has done things in its own idiosyncratic way, eschewing rural generics in favour of developing and promoting a destination with unique, authentic appeal. It will be the county's true independent spirit, dynamic tourism sector, agile approach and determination to succeed which will bring about transformational change. Through working together within the county, as well as with neighbouring destinations and partners, Herefordshire can firmly find its place on the visitor map.





1.1 The Contextual Landscape: County and UK

This DMP builds on the foundations laid over the past five years. In 2020, funds from the Marches LEP were made available via Herefordshire Council to stimulate tourism across the county. The sector had been neglected for some considerable time. Starting from scratch, huge headway was made in a short space of time. Informed by fresh insight into the county's visitor assets and target audiences, a new brand identity and marketing plan was created. In parallel, engagement with the sector was prioritised. The result: a series of impactful marketing and PR campaigns which excited media and visitors alike, exceeding all agreed KPIs.

Herefordshire County BID was established to take on the Visit Herefordshire mantle, funded by levy payers and further grant support, principally through the county's Shared Prosperity Fund allocation. At the city level, Hereford BID has been representing the interests of its levy payers since 2015. Their new business plan has tourism as one strand.

Following the de Bois Review of destination management (published September 2021), the Government tasked VisitEngland with creating a portfolio of nationally supported, strategic and high-performing Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs). They are designed to provide strong local leadership and governance in key tourism destinations, as well as working to shared priorities and targets.

The Visit Herefordshire LVEP was created in April 2024 with the intention of managing and progressing a joined up approach to the county's tourism. The LVEP application was submitted by Herefordshire County BID and Herefordshire Council. Having achieved official recognition by VisitEngland, the LVEP is now committed to transforming the county's visitor economy, working in partnership with town councils, tourism providers and key organisations such as National Landscapes, National Trust and English Heritage. Structures for managing this new partnership-working are currently being established. Each LVEP is responsible for producing a DMP, against which progress can be evaluated.

READY FOR THE FUTURE

It is noted that VisitEngland is piloting Destination Development Partnerships (DDPs) which bring together several LVEPs. If this approach is successful, then Herefordshire already has the required LVEP accreditation to progress discussions in this direction.

Marches Forward Partnership (Herefordshire, Powys, Shropshire and Monmouthshire Councils) has commissioned an evaluation of the potential for tourism across the area with 'March the Marches Tourism Feasibility 2025'. Initial findings are promising and a perfect example of a cross-borders initiative, which might attract financial support and the benefit of joined up promotional collateral.

LEARNING FROM OTHER DESTINATIONS: LVEP GOVERNANCE

To ensure strong governance foundations for the Greater Lincolnshire LVEP, a LVEP Strategic Steering Group and a DMP Working Group were established. The role of the Strategic Steering Group was initially to secure LVEP accreditation and then to monitor the DMP and works programme. It brings together Councillors with local policy influence with relevant representatives of the private sector.

The role of the DMP Working Group was to create an ambitious vision for the county's visitor economy and to co-develop a new delivery framework that underpins the DMP delivery and LVEP criteria. It is composed of Assistant Directors and Senior Local Authority Managers with budget/resource responsibility from the public sector, and strategic private sector business representatives. Both of these groups are overseen by the Destination Lincolnshire Board of Directors.



1.2 Methodology

In-depth consultation with tourism providers, partners and thought-leaders has informed this plan, alongside business and visitor surveys, relevant research and drawing on the past five years’ experience of marketing Herefordshire as a destination.

The generation of the plan has been managed by the LVEP Working Group.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

One-to-ones were conducted with a series of thought-leaders in the field from academics and entrepreneurs, through to travel journalists.

GROUP CONSULTATIONS

A combination of online and in-person consultations were used to gather views and aspirations. The programme of activity featured an open-invite ‘big picture’ online session, plus five themed online consultations. In addition, dedicated discussions were hosted for town councils and tourist information centre teams; the Herefordshire County BID board; and attendees at the County BID’s Golden Valley Roadshow.

ONE-TO-ONE CONSULTATIONS

Over fifteen consultations were held with key stakeholders including Herefordshire Council (various departments), Hereford City BID, Stronger Hereford (Towns Fund), Hereford Cathedral, Accessible Herefordshire, Dark Skies Herefordshire, Herefordshire Ramblers and Herefordshire Council’s rights of way team (PROW), Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, National Trust, National Landscapes, Historic Cities and Heritage Lottery Fund.

LVEP SURVEYS

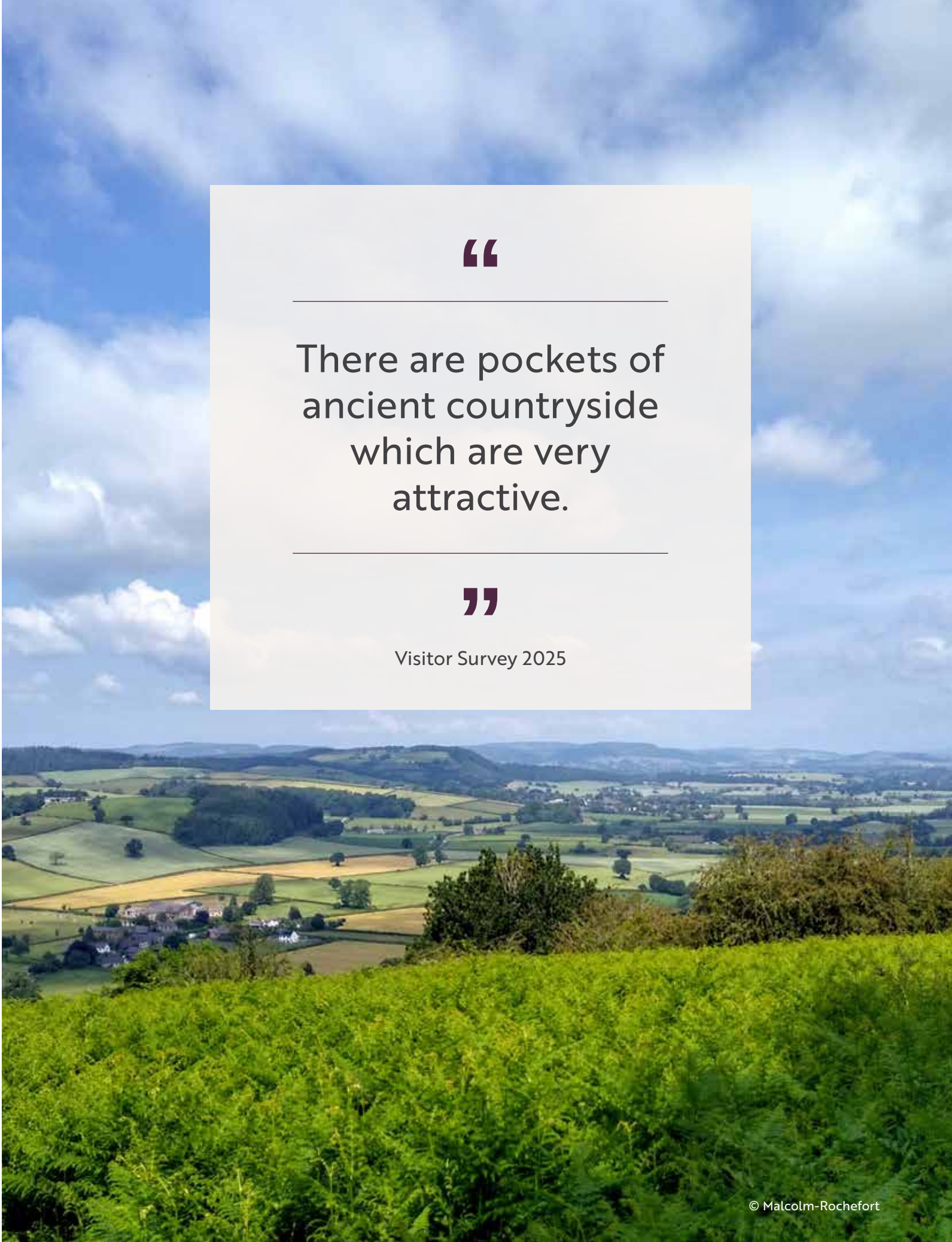
An online survey was circulated to our tourism providers, using the core questions specified by VisitEngland as well as additional questions of interest. An online survey was also sent to Visit Herefordshire subscribers, using the VisitEngland LVEP questionnaire framework.

DESK RESEARCH REVIEW

Included the following reports:

- VisitEngland’s LVEP Growth Plan Herefordshire 2024 -2025 (August 2024), The Influence of Film & TV Locations on Visits to the UK, (July 2024), England Visitor Attractions 2023 report (July 2024), The Value of the Purple Pound summary, Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Toolkit for Businesses, Developing a Wales/England Border Tourism Proposition
- 2023 STEAM Report for Herefordshire
- 2024 Place Informatics reports
- Review of website and social traffic
- Tourism trends from The Sykes Staycation Index 2024, Revfine.com, Skyscanner Travel Trends 2025, The Canopy & Stars Glamping Market Report 2025
- City & County Strategies and plans: Herefordshire Council’s 2050 Big Economic Plan; Herefordshire Festival & Events Strategy 2025; Hereford BID 2025 - 30; Visit Herefordshire Review of Marketing Campaigns & Strategic Action Recommendations 2023; The Herefordshire Sustainable DMP 2018 - 2022; Herefordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy; preview of Herefordshire Cultural Strategy 2025
- Review of Herefordshire’s status in travel guides and in media coverage
- Review of literature available at TICs
- Review of comparative destinations LVEP structures and DMPs
- Review of Marches Forward Partnerships ‘March the Marches’ Tourism Feasibility Study 2025

N.B. In relation to county-wide strategies, the DMP captures some of the outcomes in relation to the visitor economy, but it will be the role of the LVEP to fully consider and support these strategies in detail.



“

There are pockets of
ancient countryside
which are very
attractive.

”

Visitor Survey 2025

SECTION 2

Tourism Today in Herefordshire



5 Independent Market Towns

Bromyard, Ledbury, Leominster, Kington, Ross-on-Wye



2 Natural Landscapes & a Neolithic Tomb

Wye Valley and Malvern Hills, plus Arthur's Stone which is a millennium older than Stonehenge



Black & White Villages

Cycling & driving trail



11 National Trust Places, 83 Castles and Motte & Baileys



Hereford Cathedral

Home to iconic Mappa Mundi and Chained Library, plus one of four surviving 1217 copies of The Magna Carta (periodically on display)



8 Long Distance Walking Trails

3,400km of footpaths and bridleways



Contemporary Food & Drink Scene



Rural Tourism

From farm stays to visits to cider and wine producers



Signature Festivals

Including Ledbury Poetry Festival, Three Choirs, Hay Festival and Lakefest



Historic City

Home to the world's only Museum of Cider.

Herefordshire is located on the border between England and Wales, within easy reach by both motorway (M50 & M5) and train. It has proximity to large centres of population such as Cardiff, Bristol, the West Midlands, and the North West, all within 2 hours. Indeed Ledbury to the east of the county is just two and a half hours from London.

It's a rural county with the city of Hereford in the centre, surrounded by five historic market towns. The visitor offer is very much about 'the sum of many parts', whilst the rural nature of the county creates a real sense of feeling a world away.



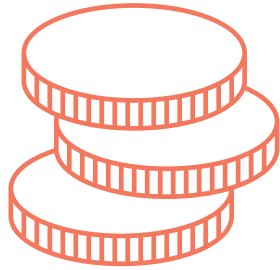
The population of the county is set to increase (particularly in Hereford, Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye) as significant housing development projects reach completion. The Herefordshire Joint Needs Assessment (HJSNA) 2024 summary, published January 2025, is guarded in estimating the likely growth in population for the county. 'Unofficial' projections predict a 3% growth over the next decade to reach 193,600 by 2031 (lower than the 6% national average). However, this could be greater given the housing target of 27,260 new dwellings between 2021 and 2041. The proportion of 'Aged 65+' is set to grow from 26% in 2021 to 33% in 2041 with a parallel reduction in those 'under 16'. The significant increase in population could support growth of the visitor economy, however an older age demographic may place pressure on labour supply.

However the growth in population will positively impact the local economy and itself be a driver of further visitor numbers. Likewise, it extends the potential to embed a sense of local pride.

2.1 Destination Performance - Herefordshire in Numbers

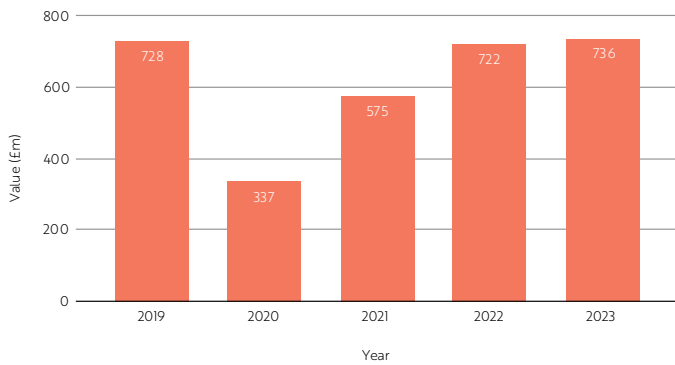
VALUE OF TOURISM TO
HEREFORDSHIRE IN 2023

£736
MILLION

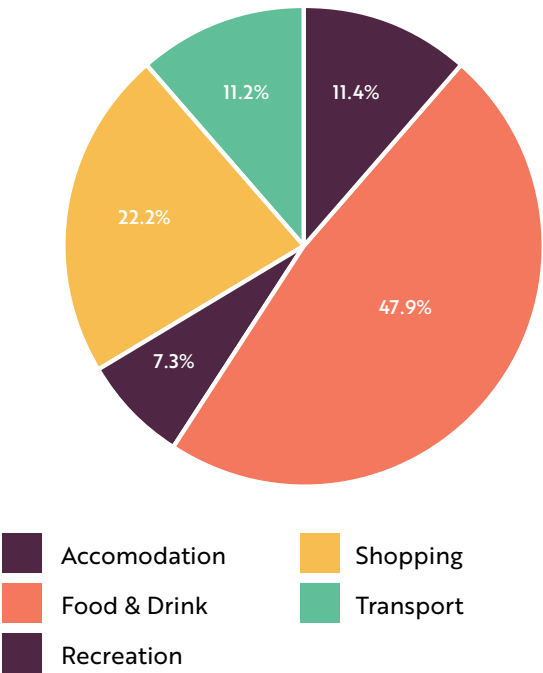


Taking account of inflation, almost exactly 2019
pre Covid level

Value of Visits (£m - indexed to 2023)

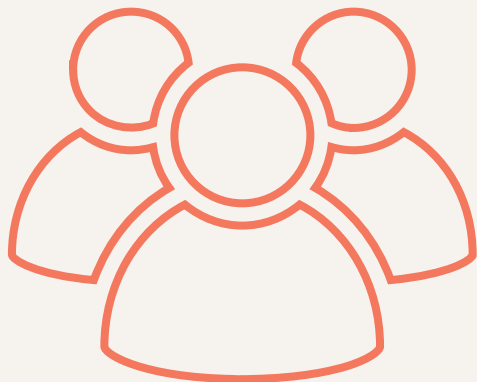


DISTRIBUTION OF
ECONOMIC IMPACT 2023



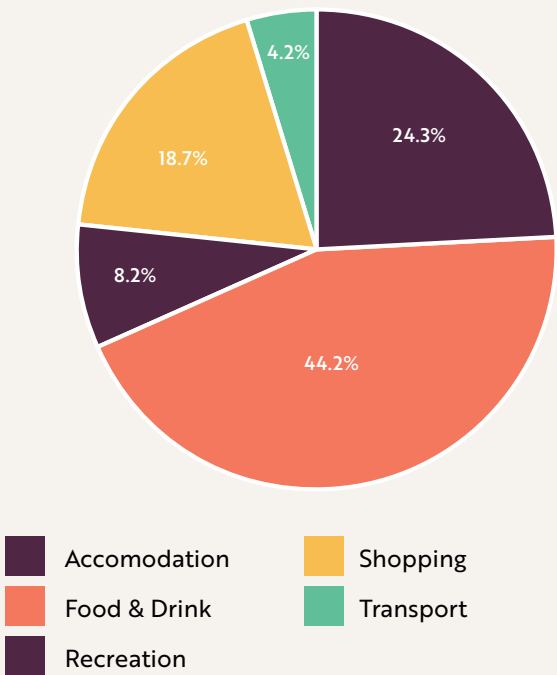
TOURISM JOBS (FTE)

8,014



(2019 equivalent was 7,587)
That's 16% of all FTE jobs
(Source: Nomis)

DISTRIBUTION OF
EMPLOYMENT - 2023



The visitor economy impacts a substantial
number of sectors, businesses and lives.



visitor days from
5.9 MILLION
visitors

5 MILLION DAY VISITORS

Of the overnight visitors (900k) ...

598,000

stayed in paid accommodation
(average stay duration 3.43 days)

291,000

stayed with family and friends



68%

of visitors are day visitors

32%

are staying visitors

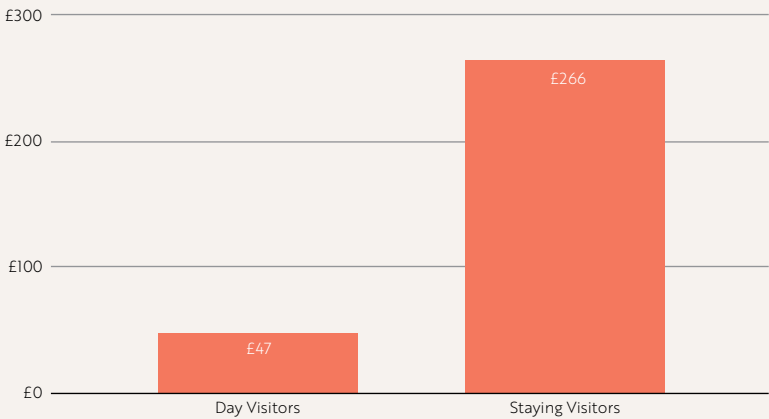
Day visitor average spend

£47

is much lower than staying
visitors average of

£266

Value Per Visit - 2023

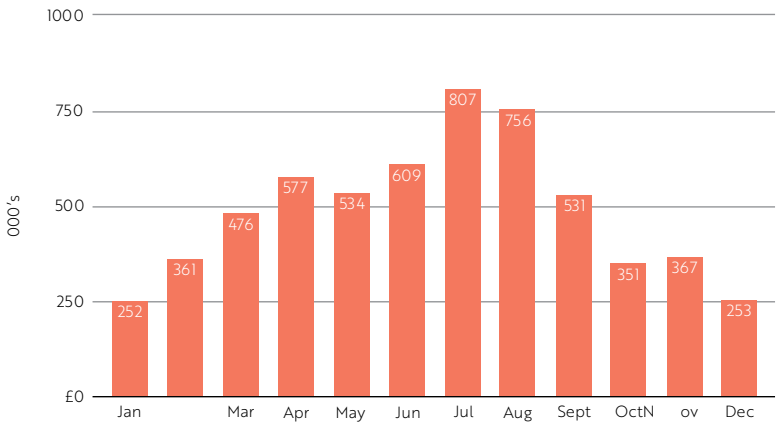


Staying visitors average stay is

3.43
DAYS

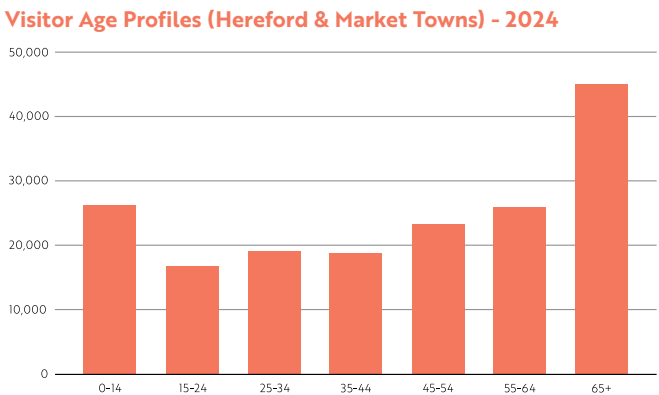
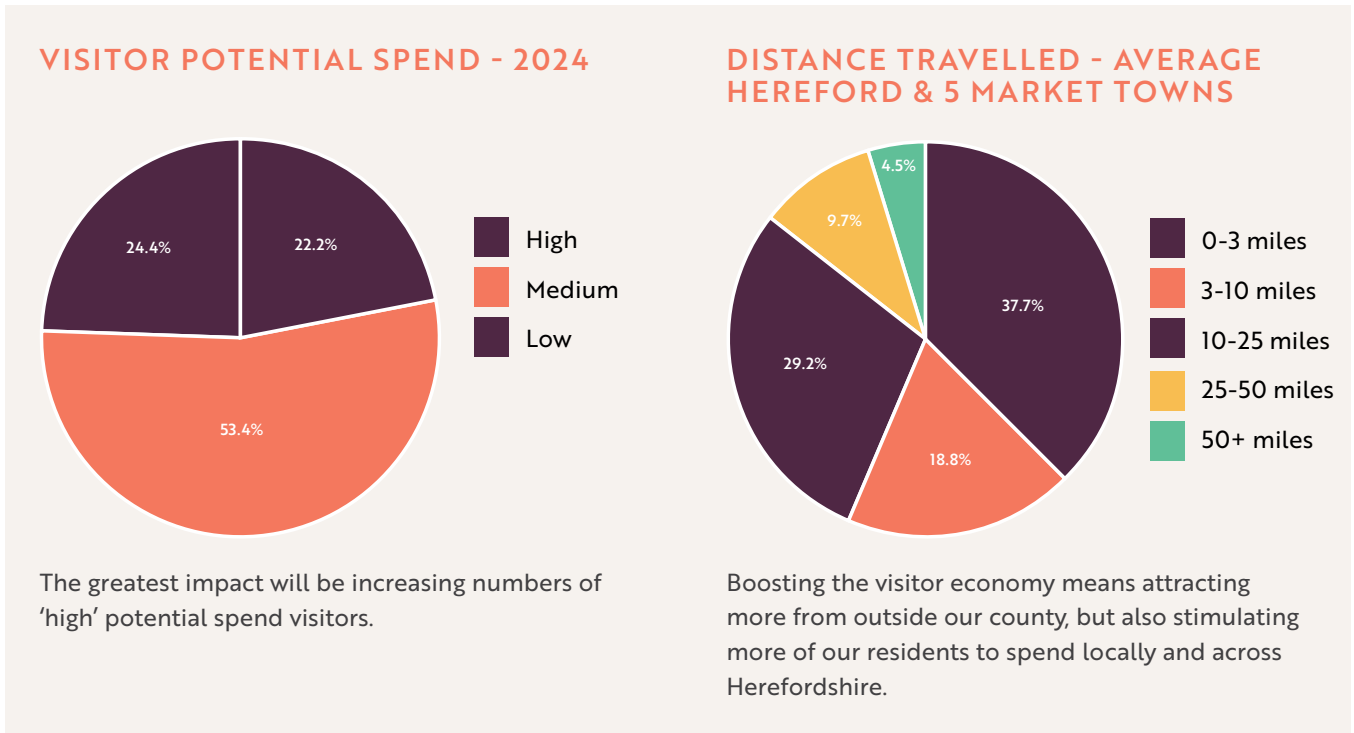
(a little above UK average
of 3.1 days)

Visitors by Month - 2023

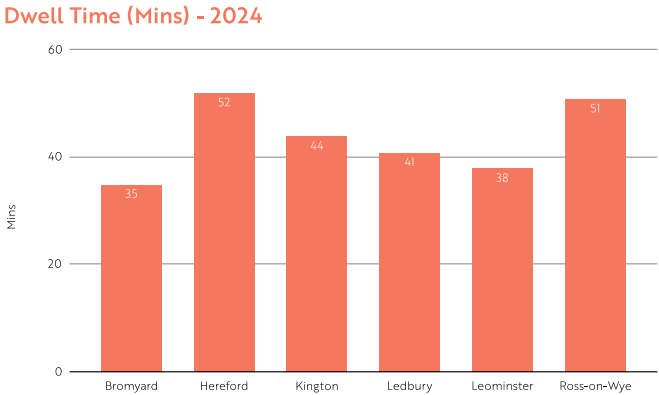


2.2 Drilling Down - Visitor Numbers (Hereford City & Market Towns)

This data is from Place Informatics. It allows us to assess visitor numbers and origins for Hereford and each of our market towns. ‘Visitors’ include those living in or close to our county borders as well as ‘tourists’.



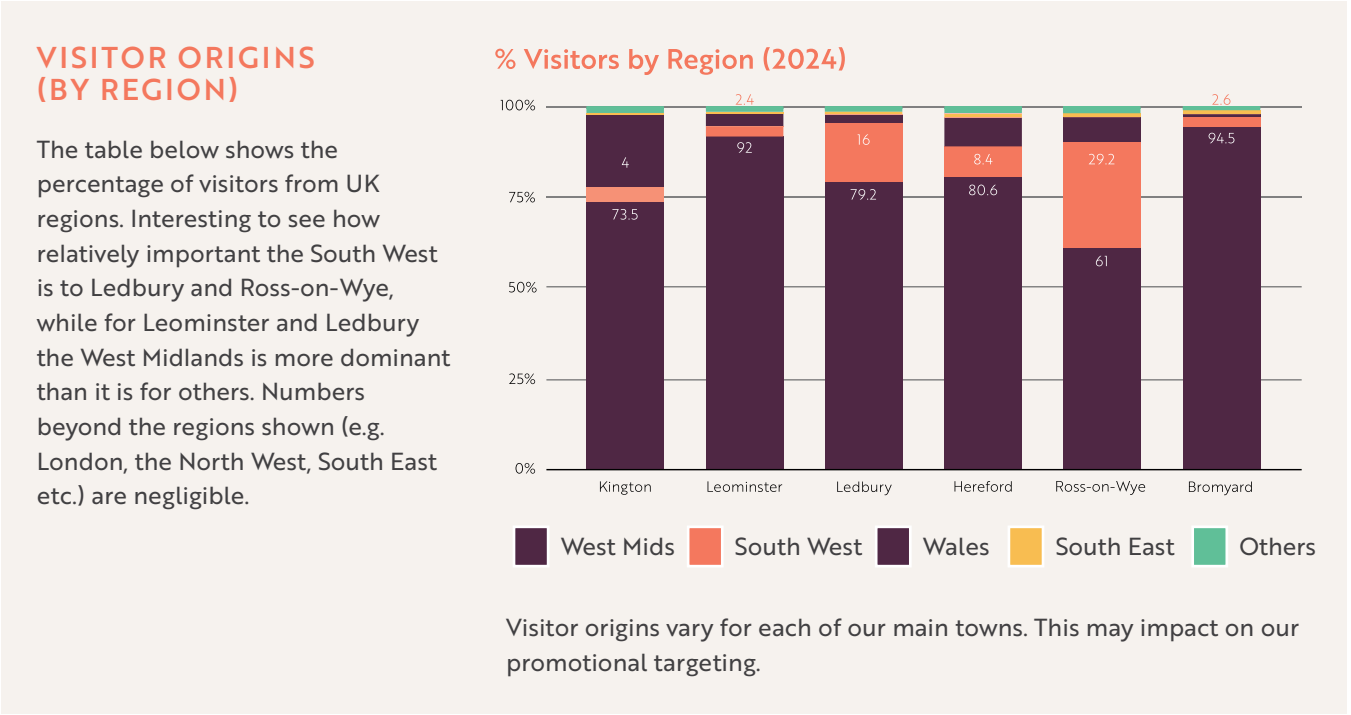
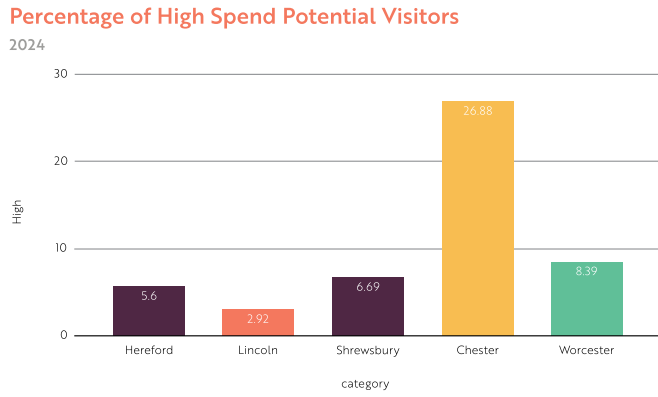
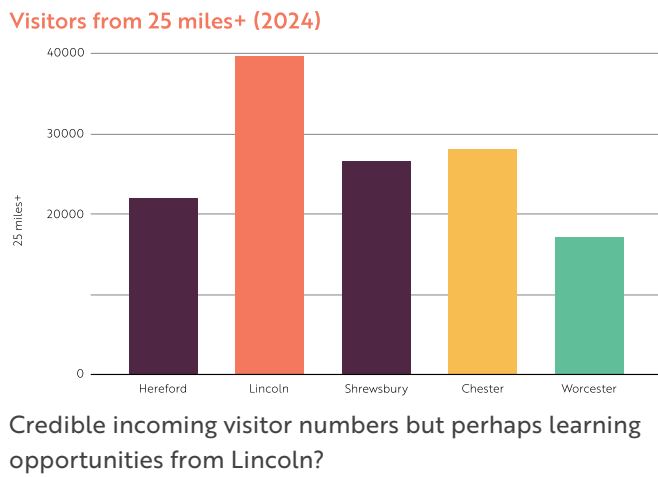
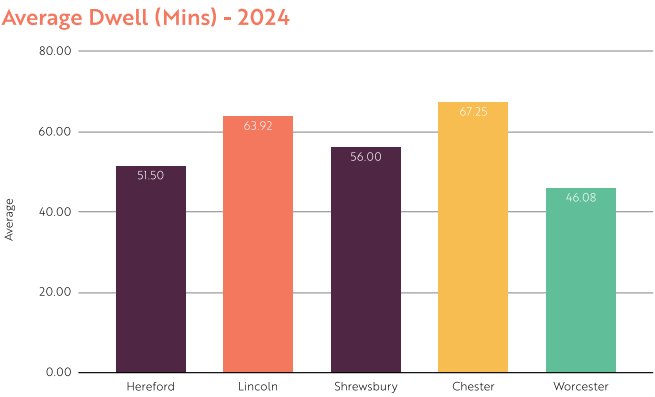
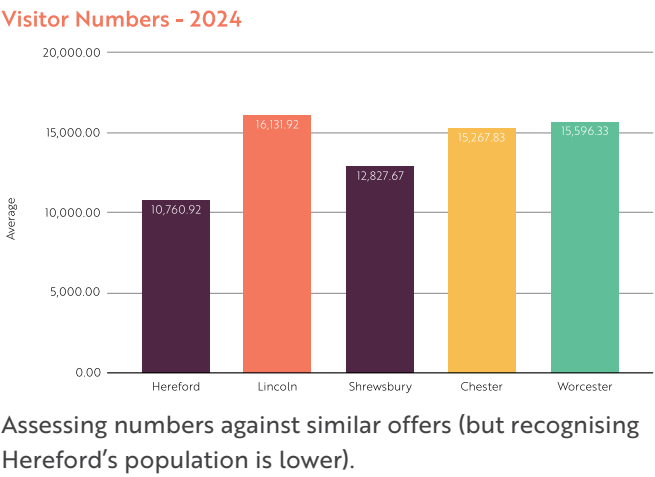
We skew towards an older demographic.



Ross-on-Wye’s dwell time is impressive. What lessons can we share across our county?

2.3 Benchmarking - Hereford with Lincoln, Shrewsbury, Chester, Worcester (2024)

Source: Place Informatics, 2024



2.4 On the Horizon

PROJECTS & INVESTMENTS

Hereford is benefiting from significant investment, with a series of projects underway which will strengthen its offer, particularly its credentials as a green city. These new projects will help make Hereford an increasingly attractive proposition for visitors.

- 1 Transformed Castle Green Pavilion to open, featuring striking riverside cafe and enhancing use of this area for events - 2025.
- 2 Launch of annual Military History Festival, on Castle Green, driven by a Board including Hay Festival experts - September 2025
- 3 Work to be completed on new Hereford Transport Hub - 2026
- 4 Creation of a wetland nature reserve (close to Hereford Transport Hub) as well as other blue/green corridors with enhanced visitor access - 2026
- 5 Huge expansion of National Trust Weir Garden from 3.5 acre garden to a 65-hectare valley which is wildlife-rich and extends public access, including walking path connection with the city centre and increasing visitors by 50%+ in year 1 - 2026.
- 6 Hereford Shirehall with new library, exhibition space and community hub to open - autumn 2026
- 7 Opening of new Hereford Museum & Art Gallery to include permanent display of The Herefordshire Hoard and contemporary interpretation of the county's unique story, within a passiv-haus building - 2028
- 8 Restoration of Bartonsham Meadow as a flagship urban nature reserve linked to the city centre - ongoing
- 9 The development of over 400 new inner city homes on Merton Meadows in Hereford, bringing a range of residential opportunities to the heart of Hereford. Alongside the housing development, Herefordshire Council is exploring the potential for more hotel accommodation in the city and wider county. - completion tba

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the county, more modest investments are being made in pubs with rooms situated in or near market towns, including, Hop Pole and Royal Oak in Bromyard, The Riverside in Ross-on-Wye and The Feathers in Ledbury. Meanwhile, Ledbury has also secured funding of c£259k for a John Masefield project. Finally, a new art gallery is proposed at Hellens Manor, near Ledbury, to display a special collection of paintings, with a multi-purpose building intended for events, outreach and environmental programmes.

There is no doubt the bulk of foreseeable investment will be in Hereford. However, the commitment of the DMP is to leverage the improved city offer to signpost to the broader attractions of market towns, rural scenery and activities and high-quality accommodation and food & drink providers.



2.5 Anniversary dates

There are a number of key dates over the next ten years which can be leveraged as a rallying call for both destination marketing and development activities.

- 2025
 - 50th anniversary of the Wye Valley Walk
 - 900th anniversary of Leominster Priory (celebration of Romanesque Sculpture)
- 2026
 - 1350th anniversary of the diocese of Hereford (predates the foundation of England) in 676 AD (early medieval period)
 - 30th anniversary of Ledbury Poetry
- 2028
 - 300th Three Choirs Festival (will be hosted by Hereford)
 - 150th anniversary of the birth of poet John Masefield
- 2029
 - 25th anniversary of the Herefordshire Trail
- 2030
 - 700th anniversary of murder of 1st Earl of March, Roger Mortimer
 - 260th anniversary of William Gilpin taking the Wye Tour
- 2031
 - 60th anniversary of Offa's Dyke Path
- 2034
 - Centenary of Elgar's death
- 2035
 - Centenary of Alfred Watkins' death (Member of the Woolhope club, pioneer of ley lines and modern photography)

2.6 Positive Partnerships

A wide range of organisations are either actively involved in (or directly impacting) the tourism sector. There is great scope to forge partnerships with groups to explore new opportunities. This is a mindset our LVEP will foster.

On a sector-by-sector basis, they include:

CULTURE & HERITAGE

Herefordshire Cultural Partnership, National Trust, English Heritage, Hereford Cathedral, Hereford College of Arts, h.Art, Wye Valley Makers, Churches Tourism Group, Town Councils

NATURE & AGRICULTURE

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, National Landscapes, Woodland Trust, CPRE Herefordshire, Dark Skies Herefordshire, Farm Herefordshire, The Rural Hub

FOOD & DRINK

Herefordshire Food Alliance, Ledbury Food Group, Town Councils

TRANSPORT

Great Western Railway, Transport for Wales, West Midlands Railway, bus companies, Daffodil Line, Herefordshire Council, Town Councils

WALKING

Public Rights of Way at Herefordshire Council, contractors (e.g. Balfour Beatty). Herefordshire Ramblers Association, Walkers are Welcome, Golden Valley Pilgrim Way, Mortimer Trailblazers

Cross-border activity will be particularly relevant in the future, with the opportunity to pool resources with neighbouring LVEPs and destination organisations with shared objectives, such as Marches Forward Partnership, Visit Worcestershire, Visit Shropshire, Cotswolds Plus, Monmouthshire, County Council, Powys County Council and Visit Wales.



2.7 Spotlight on Accommodation

STEAM REPORT 2019-2023 - FINAL HEREFORDSHIRE					
Serviced Accommodation 2023	2023		Non-serviced Accommodation 2023	2023	
	Est.	Beds		Est.	Beds
Serviced Accommodation Total	267	4,469	Non-serviced Accommodation Total	295	11,492
+50 Rooms	6	1,013	Self-Catering	231	2,420
11-50 Rooms	43	1,709	Static Caravans/Camping	14	316
<10 Rooms	218	1,747	Touring Caravans/Camping	50	5,604

The 2023 STEAM data above highlights the greater proportion of non-serviced accommodation in the county reflecting the plethora of choice available, from barn conversions and treehouses to camping and caravan sites, as well as Airbnb properties. Herefordshire is a recognised hotspot for glamping and must continue to support farm diversification as well as explore the potential for a larger-scale glamping project. In parallel, small scale expansion of accommodation by pubs and restaurants should be actively encouraged.

Research suggests the most immediate challenge, and perhaps greater opportunity lies with hotel provision. The STEAM data tells only part of the story. There has been consistent feedback and evidence that hotel provision in the county is unable to meet demand, particularly at peak periods. This matter was raised during the consultations, in discussions with thought-leaders and in the 'March the Marches' consultancy report (2025). In Hereford, provision centres around independent hotels, namely Castle House and Green Dragon as well as chains including Premier Inn, Travelodge and, just outside the city, Warner Hotels. In all the market towns, except for Leominster, there are small hotels, for example The Feathers in Ledbury and The Royal in Ross-on-Wye. The opportunity for more diverse offerings to cater for the tastes and pockets of potential visitors, particularly at peak periods, needs to be better understood. Herefordshire Council is currently in the process of commissioning a hotel demand study to assess the gaps in provision and potential case for investment.

In the meantime, the dearth of hotel provision is impacting Hereford, Ledbury and Leominster particularly, the latter most of all as it has no operational hotel.

Town	Hotels	SUM of Rooms	Population	Visitor numbers (Place Informatics)
Bromyard	1	10	4,700	89,627
Golden Valley	1	10		
Hay-on-Wye	2	31	2,000	
Hereford	12	574	61,900	938,735
Kington	2	28	3,200	95,869
Ledbury	3	37	9,600	298,696
Leominster	0	0	11,900	304,122
Malvern	1	24		
Much Birch	1	21		
Ross-on-Wye	4	125	11,000	394,200
Symonds Yat, Whitchurch	3	70		
Grand Total	30	930		

A CLOSER LOOK: STAYING IN LEOMINSTER

The 2024 'Threads Through Creation' event at the Priory in Leominster attracted 19,000 visitors over a 6 week period with a noticeable uplift in spend in cafes in the town. The absence of hotels is likely to have at the least impaired the visitor experience and at worst reduced visitor numbers and spend. Similarly it must restrict the numbers staying in North Herefordshire to enjoy the Black and White Villages Trail, National Trust properties, popular gardens and cider-making attractions. Leominster has a greater population than Ledbury and almost equal visitor numbers which points to a likely commercial opportunity to plug the gap.

In Hereford, it has been encouraging to see the renaissance of the Green Dragon Hotel which has full occupancy in the main months. However, anecdotal evidence points to periods of the year where visitors have struggled to find vacancies in the city, resulting in escalating prices and potential frustration. There are plans for at least one new hotel in Hereford in the next 3 to 5 years and this will have a positive impact on visitor numbers. Ledbury has similar capacity issues but we understand that the Feathers Hotel is planning to expand its provision which again will be beneficial.

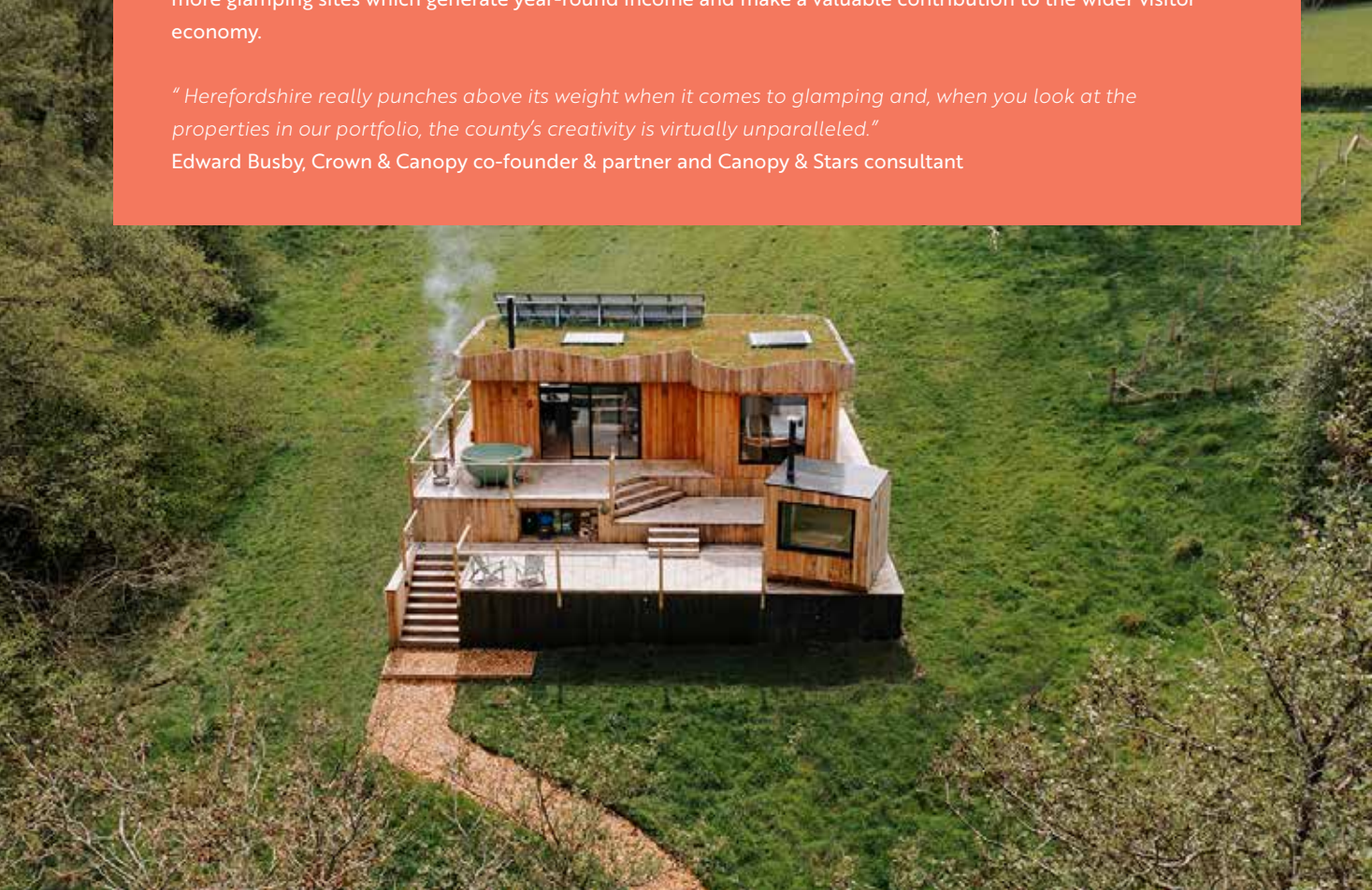
Feedback suggests that most hotels in the area are satisfied with occupancy levels both mid week (business) and weekends/school holidays with visiting families, walkers, golfers etc. There is however a marked difference in Symonds Yat which is reliant on visitors here to enjoy the scenery and the River Wye - they are more impacted by wet weather cancellations. They are susceptible to adverse weather forecasts, which is causing some concern for ongoing viability. Symonds Yat is a significant tourism area and likewise Golden Valley.

GROWTH OF GLAMPING: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HEREFORDSHIRE

The appetite for glamping continues to grow and evolve in response to current trends for 'one of a kind' stays, sustainable travel and wellness. Herefordshire's array of options ranges from 5-star treehouses to unique off-grid retreats with wood-fired saunas. There is real potential to expand the county's accommodation offer by creating more glamping sites which generate year-round income and make a valuable contribution to the wider visitor economy.

" Herefordshire really punches above its weight when it comes to glamping and, when you look at the properties in our portfolio, the county's creativity is virtually unparalleled."

Edward Busby, Crown & Canopy co-founder & partner and Canopy & Stars consultant



2.8 Visit Herefordshire - Website and Engagement

WEBSITE

Traffic (users) - 2024

355,648

Bounce (including paid)
38.38% (41.15% mobile)
2.29 pages per session
2mins 48secs avg. session duration
8,717 PDF downloads
15.6M impressions in Google

SOCIAL

Traffic (users) - 2024



Views 447,207
Reach 961,800
Reach increased 332% (on 2023)
Link clicks Increased by 677% (on 2023)



Views 484,900
Reach 116,900
Content interactions & reach both increased by 100% (on 2023)

PROMOTIONAL SPEND

The Covid recovery grant was used to research and create new branding, website and promotional campaigns, including paid ads. Post funding budgets have been reduced and this has had some bearing on previous substantial website growth. Despite this organic traffic is up, reflecting depth of interesting content and SEO.



“
Lots of things to do,
great countryside

”
Visitor Survey 2025

2.9 The Thought-Leaders' Viewpoint

As part of the development of the DMP, interviews were conducted with a number of industry thought-leaders. They included academics, travel journalists, consultants in the hospitality sector, VisitEngland and other DMO personnel. There was a good degree of consistency in their remarks indicating that the industry as a whole is experiencing the same challenges across the country.

At the macro economic level:

- England as a tourism destination is experiencing negative pressure.
- Brexit has created issues around access and trade as well as affecting perceptions of the UK as more unwelcoming and somewhat gloomy.
- The expense and inconvenience of a separate visa regime is discouraging foreign tourists.
- The ongoing cost of living crisis, as well as the increase in both the national minimum wage and National Insurance contributions is having, and will likely continue to have, a negative impact on the sector in the short term.
- Skills shortages and perceptions of the industry as low paid and low skilled.
- Central government's inability to coordinate and fund the sector adequately, compared with European rivals.
- Concern that after the post Covid staycation boom, tourists are now more inclined to consider destinations abroad that offer guaranteed warm weather and relatively lower prices.

At the local level:

- Herefordshire is a large rural destination with a small ageing population, 30% of whom live in Hereford.
- It suffers from generic negative perceptions of English rural destinations, including: not enough to do, sameness, limited wet weather offer, poor night time economy, few large hotels and few ready-made packages, river pollution, final mile issues and lack of public transport solutions.

More specifically experts were keen to stress how important it is for emerging destinations like Herefordshire to "get the basics right" from the start, such as:

- A strong emphasis on keeping the public realm clean and tidy (right down to collaborations around individual streets).
- Matching activity and operating hours to actual footfall.
- Having a series of strong incentives for independent businesses to drive distinctiveness especially in retail and food and drink.
- Engaging constantly with transport providers to offer promotions that entice visitors to explore.
- Working together with neighbours on all sides, for example, joint itineraries that have broad appeal and benefit all partners.
- The role of the Council in supporting and facilitating growth through planning, sector support and coordination and providing data to potential investors to give them confidence in the destination.

Our respondents did however see a number of areas where Herefordshire could develop a unique and compelling offer:

- **Active Travellers:** Plenty of opportunities for walking, hiking, biking, wild swimming etc provided that the relevant infrastructure, such as EV charging points can be developed.
- **Medieval History:** The borderland location and the sheer number of castles and mottes and baileys make for a rich "Game of Thrones" type experience.
- **Agritourism:** With an established reputation for cider, beef, asparagus and potatoes, there is always food to celebrate and eat, as well as farm-based accommodation and a growing range of experiences.
- **Wellness and Wellbeing Trends:** The county has a number of excellent retreats with its uncrowded and unspoilt nature reinforcing its strong credentials in this area. Moreover, the relatively low population and lack of light pollution lends itself to dark skies experiences.
- **Religious Tourism:** A strong global trend and Herefordshire has a significant number of exceptional churches, some of which offer overnight accommodation.

More generally, there was recognition for the itineraries and destination stories already created, such as The Watkins Way and Cider Circuits. There is potential to develop other specialisms in growing areas such as single-sex tourism, screen tourism and experiential products. Examples of these experiences include stay on a cider farm, meet the cider maker, make the cider, taste the cider and then take it home. Finally, to be successful, the experts' advice is to focus on areas that will differentiate Herefordshire from other rural destinations and do a few things really well.



2.10 SWOT Analysis

Herefordshire has much to be proud of; travel writers, influencers, and most importantly, visitors, love what they find here. Our dynamic tourism sector consists of many interesting independent businesses. Yet, if Herefordshire is to further develop its visitor economy, there are a number of factors which will impact on potential growth as detailed below.

STRENGTHS

- Diverse sector with interesting, independent businesses
- Travel writers, influencers and visitors love our offer
- Central location, well-connected by rail and motorway
- Established festivals (e.g. Ledbury Poetry and Three Choirs)
- Reputation of Hereford Cathedral and Mappa Mundi
- Strong food & drink offer, including locally- made cider & wine and internationally reputed Hereford beef
- Border history, with many castles and churches
- Characterful market towns
- Bucolic countryside, remote and unspoilt feel, **plus access to wildlife**
- Long-distance walking trails including Wye Valley Walk, Mortimer Trail, Offa’s Dyke Path, Herefordshire Trail
- Stalwart in the glamping sector

WEAKNESSES

- Emerging destination with relatively low domestic and international awareness
- Confusion with Hertfordshire
- Overreliance on day visits which generate less income
- Spread/volume of accommodation means certain key areas are weak
- Underdeveloped visitor offer in Hereford, alongside lack of profile and place-making as an historic city
- Poor transport connections between towns; cars tend to be a necessity due to rural location
- Lack of clarity regarding individual roles of tourism organisations which confuses providers
- High density of footpaths means condition can be poor
- Seasonality - many attractions close in autumn/winter
- Limited opportunities for wet-weather activities
- Sparse & ageing population across relatively large geography
- Travel guides do not recognise contemporary visitor offer
- Lack of taxi provision

OPPORTUNITIES

- Strong sustainable story e.g. Council’s net-zero targets, work to recover the Wye, regenerative farming
- Renaissance of Hereford thanks to Town’s Fund investment, public realm improvements, more accessible green space
- LVEP status will enhance collaborative opportunities, such as the border proposition
- There is potential for both the devolution agenda and Destination Development Partnerships to further reinforce this partnership approach across a wider geography
- Increased on-screen profile with release of Hamnett in 2025
- Investment in historic hotels/pubs e.g. The Hop Pole (Bromyard)
- Growing interest in experiential tourism and dark skies tourism
- Joined up focus on festivals via Council strategy, plus new Military History Festival and Herefordshire Histories Festival
- Important ‘anniversary’ dates which can be leveraged in our marketing
- Growth in accessible walking routes and accommodation
- Digital approaches to tourism - getting ahead of the game
- Agritourism and farm diversification
- The county’s links to the SAS reinforce our outdoor pursuits positioning

THREATS

- Negative perceptions regarding river pollution
- Blurring into oblivion as just another rural county if proposition is not truly distinctive
- Loss of festivals e.g. Nozstock, River Carnival, with others at risk, particularly those reliant on volunteers e.g. ‘fallow’ year for Beer on the Wye and Indie Food Festival
- Impact of climate change: Increased flooding and wet weather
- Potential change in legislation which would require self-catering properties to have Energy Performance Certificate, potentially at a minimum C rating. Will particularly affect older properties
- Increase in employers’ National Insurance contributions and Minimum Wage levels will come into force April 2025, alongside a reduction in business rate relief extended to hospitality businesses
- Failure to embed productive partnership working model
- Competition from other destinations with bigger budgets/ resourcing
- New Cotswolds Outlet may divert a proportion of Herefordshire’s potential visitors accessing via M5/M50
- Condition of public highways

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Based on the SWOT analysis, this table summarises the principal challenges and recommended responses.

Challenges & considerations	Response
Relatively low domestic and international awareness, coupled with decreasing budgets. Lack of impact has resulted in other destinations growing at our expense.	Need a strong, distinctive proposition focused on being very well known for a small number of things. Coordinated investment in marketing & PR is a must to keep Herefordshire front of mind.
Over reliant on day visits which generate significantly less income than overnights, coupled with a lack of accommodation.	Ensure marketing is targeted at the most valuable audiences with propensity to spend. Develop more experiences/itineraries with a view to occupying visitors for longer and find ways to increase quality bedstock.
Seasonality results in closure of many attractions over late autumn and winter, which impacts accommodation providers.	Opportunity to create out of season events and experiences which draw in our target markets throughout the year e.g. Wassailing.
Hereford sits at the heart of the county but its visitor offer has been left behind compared to similar cities.	Focused, collaborative place shaping and attracting investment to drive improvements and enable the city to reach its potential.
Many rural counties in the UK, potential to blur into oblivion.	The need for a distinctive proposition.
High density of footpaths, but variable state of repair, even on key routes.	Lobby for recognition of Public Rights Of Way team and for resources. Focus promotion and repair work on prioritised routes to ensure a positive experience.
As a very rural county with limited public transport (particularly poor connections between towns) cars are often a necessity.	Opportunity to attract EV drivers, provided charging infrastructure is in place.
The impacts of climate change are being felt through increased flooding and wet weather.	Look at wet-weather activities and also support regenerative tourism.
Fourth least populated county, also ageing population which impacts on recruitment and skills development	Work with partners to help young people explore tourism careers.

LEARNING FROM OTHER DESTINATIONS: PLACE SHAPING

The strategic vision and regeneration priorities for Chester are set out in the One City Plan. Built upon existing networks and established groups, five working groups - each chaired by a lead partner - are responsible for delivering the plan. For example, the ‘Making Chester’ group is central to the plan’s success due to its remit which spans place-making, city centre reimagining and green spaces through to inward investment, skills and enterprise.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE: HEREFORD CITY

The challenges facing the city are not new. In 2017, Historic England published the Urban Panel Review Paper: Hereford which acknowledged ‘*what a fascinating historic city Hereford is and of the sheer quality of the buildings and townscape of its historic core*’ whilst highlighting ‘*just how fractured much of the townscape around the City Walls had become, the large numbers of vacant or underused buildings... the continuing problems that traffic still causes... many elements of the Masterplan for the Edgar Street Grid area remain unrealised and the sense of arrival at the Station is just as poor as it ever was.*”

SECTION 3

Vision & Targets



Vision & Targets

THE VISION is to cultivate a vibrant tourism sector in Herefordshire that offers distinctive and unforgettable visitor experiences. We aim to stay true to the essence of Herefordshire as a place, generating diverse employment opportunities, benefiting our local communities, and safeguarding our environment and heritage. Our goal is to increase visitor numbers, particularly those who are inclined to spend with our local retailers and service providers. A crucial aspect of this vision is to boost the number of visitors who stay for more than one day. This Destination Management Plan (DMP) outlines the roadmap to achieving this success.

TARGETS

There are stepping stones to achieving the 10 year vision. Realistically we need to plan around a phased approach as follows;

PHASE 1 FOUNDATIONS



YEARS 1 & 2 (2025 & 2026)

Building the foundations, delivering quick wins, embedding a new model of partnership-working and piloting collaborative tourism marketing and development projects.

PHASE 2 REALISATION



YEARS 3, 4 & 5 (2027-2029)

The visitor economy will start to benefit from the initial delivery of the DMP. The opening of the new Hereford Museum & Art Gallery will be of particular importance as the spotlight will be shining on the county during this period.

PHASE 3 CAPITALISATION



YEARS 6, 7, 8, 9 (2030-2034)

Accelerated economic growth.

“

Go to one of the last
unspoiled corners
of England and
experience le terroir
d'Angleterre.

”

Visitor Survey 2025

The targets we set will therefore be reflective of each phase. They also assume significant effort will be made to increase marketing budgets to allow investment in placing our messaging in front of target audiences who otherwise may stray to the many alternative LVEP regions with similarly enticing propositions.

TARGETS	ECONOMIC IMPACT	VISITOR DAYS	VISITORS - OVERNIGHT STAYS	FTE JOBS*
Current (2023)	£735m	8m	890,000	8,014
Phase - FOUNDATIONS	+3% p.a.	+3% p.a.	+3% p.a.	Static
Phase - REALISATION	+5% p.a.	+5% p.a.	+5% p.a.	+3% p.a.
Phase - CAPITALISATION	+8% p.a.	+8% p.a.	+8% p.a.	+5% p.a.

As context, more established destinations are targeting 5/6% p.a. growth
 * FTE jobs - Static growth in Foundations phase recognises current economic pressures and the potential impact of N.I. increases and reduction in business rates relief

The principal measure for these uplifts will be STEAM, using the 2023 figures as our baseline. This data will be supported by business and visitor surveys conducted on a minimum annual basis, as well as regular reports from Place Informatics.

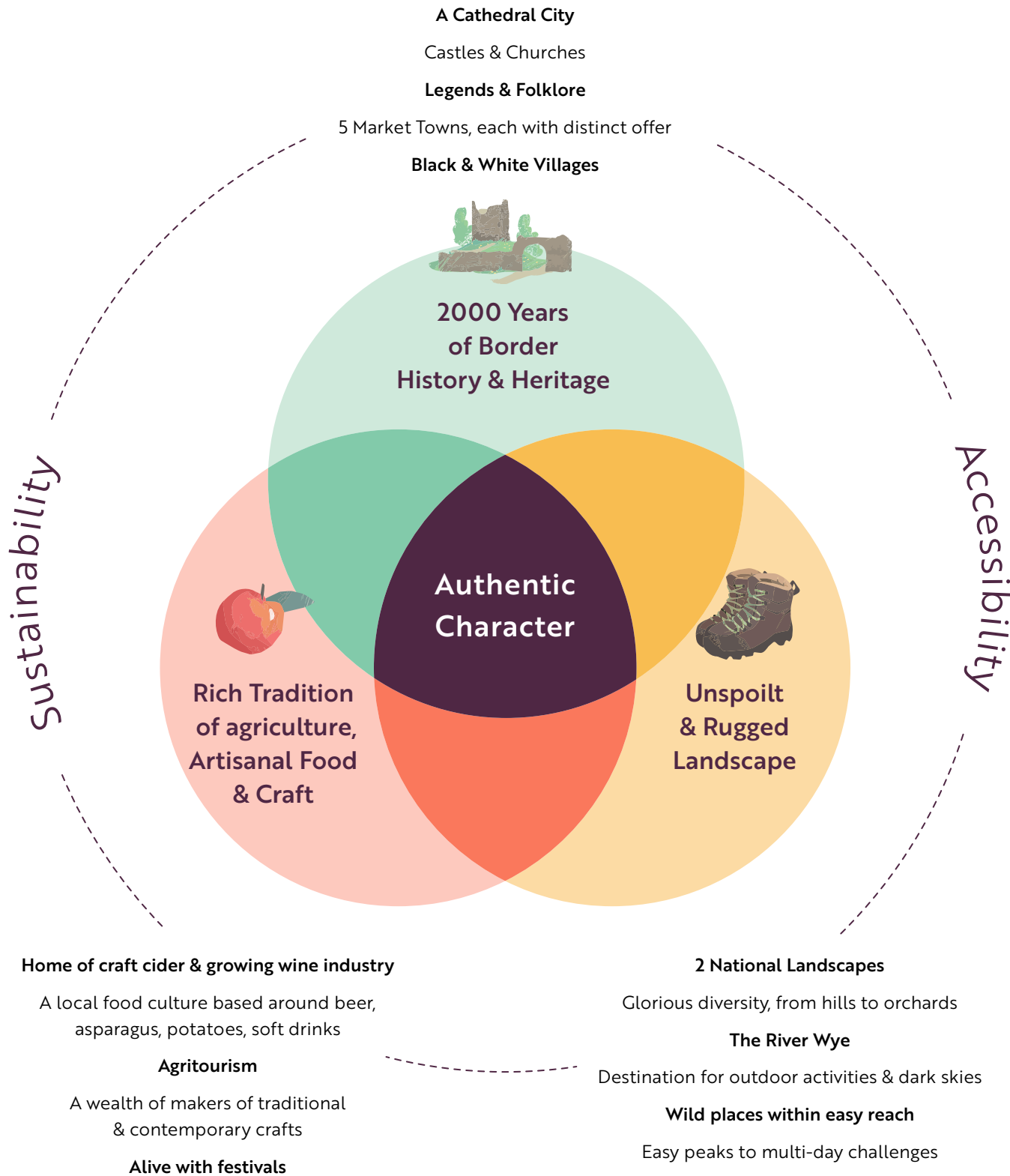
LVEP PARTNERSHIP GOAL

In addition, the LVEP’s goal is to ensure a coherent, partnership-led approach to delivering the county’s tourism development and marketing, with a focus on driving innovation and best practice.



3.1 Destination Herefordshire: The Proposition

To achieve our vision and targets, the need for a strong proposition is a given. Herefordshire has a real sense of place and a distinctive history, landscape and tradition of food and drink. The refined visitor proposition for 2025 onwards distills everything that makes Herefordshire special into three brand pillars. The county’s authentic character sits at the very heart, with year-round cultural events, sustainability and accessibility threaded throughout.



3.2 Exploring the Proposition

Visit Herefordshire's three brand pillars are:

2000 YEARS OF BORDER HISTORY AND HERITAGE

- Unique borderland history, a place where power has been played and fierce battles fought, especially by the medieval Marcher Lords;
- Monuments to this past pepper the landscape, from castle ruins and tiny churches - many with Romanesque Sculpture - through to our iconic Cathedral and famed 'Black and White' half-timber architecture;
- Historic riverside city and five characterful market towns, packed with heritage buildings and atmosphere, as well as contemporary, independent places to eat and shop.

MISSION: For Herefordshire to become synonymous with the medieval era

Growth Opportunities:

- Drive city place shaping with a view to enhancing the display and interpretation of Hereford's heritage assets (e.g. light up city walls, permanent exhibition of Magna Carta);
- Progress the potential for a medieval event as proposed by Hereford BID and work with cultural partners to help bring the border story to life;
- Devise and develop Marcher Lords Castle Walk;
- Build on successes of Golden Valley Pilgrim Way, both on the route and in other areas, on foot and by bike;
- Consider further development of flagship driving route, The Watkins Way.

RICH TRADITION OF AGRICULTURE, ARTISANAL FOOD & CRAFT

- One of the world's largest cider apple growing and cider producing destinations. Home to a wealth of artisanal producers, as well as the household names of Westons Cider and Bulmers. Plus the only Museum of Cider;
- Hereford beef has an international reputation and modern-day 'exports' such as The Beefy Boys;
- Well-known for our asparagus, potatoes, soft fruit, as well as a growing wine and spirits sector;
- Many fantastic food producers and places to eat plus growth of agritourism experiences;
- Rich seam of makers and craftspeople, with opportunities to buy their work at markets, special events and open studios, or alternatively get hands-on with a learning experience.

MISSION: For 'the Home of Cider' be recognised as a top ten food & drink destination in the UK

Growth Opportunities:

- Guided experiences to taste ciders and meet the makers as well as new agritourism experiences;
- City centre cider-tasting experience;
- Celebrate our food & drink through a dedicated event or trail, which could also explore links with regenerative farming;
- Reinforce our artisan blacksmithing heritage by looking at potential for Hereford BID's Ferrous Festival to be taken forward in a new way.

UNSPOILT AND RUGGED LANDSCAPE

- Framed by peaks in every direction, with the Black Mountains in the west, Malvern Hills in the east, Hergest Ridge in the north and Symonds Yat in the south, complete with jaw-dropping views;
- Two National Landscapes and a gloriously diverse county with rolling fields, ancient woodland, orchards, hop yards, hills and valleys;
- Wye Valley is the birthplace of tourism in England, with Ross-on-Wye, Symonds Yat, Hereford and Hay-on-Wye acting as centres for canoeing and Stand Up Paddleboarding;
- Plenty to offer walkers: eight long-distance walking trails, including Wye Valley Walk, Offa's Dyke National Trail, Herefordshire Trail, Mortimer Trail and Three Choirs Way, plus countless short circular routes;
- Cycle routes such as Cider Circuits proved popular and cycling is a growth sector;
- Sense of being remote, surrounded by peace and quiet, is attracting wellness/retreats market;
- Access to diverse wildlife, from peregrine falcons to wild ponies;
- Herefordshire is recognised as a county with low light pollution and benefits from dark skies.

MISSION: For Herefordshire to excite outdoor adventurers as a new, undiscovered playground

Growth Opportunities:

- Promote activities across the scale, from easy peaks to extreme challenges;
- Enhance supporting infrastructure and services such as baggage transfer, luggage lockers alongside increasing the number of walk leaders;
- Raise awareness of dark skies potential and supporting providers.

GROWTH POTENTIAL OF AGRITOURISM

As a rural county, agriculture contributes a significant proportion of our GDP. It can also play an important role in developing further agritourism opportunities. Many farmers have already heavily invested in diversification initiatives whether accommodation related (e.g. catering cottages, camping or glamping) or product/service initiatives such as retail (Oakchurch and The Hop Pocket) or products as wide ranging as breweries, pubs, cider, liqueurs, apple juice, ice cream and vending machines. There is market potential to grow this service provision, not least as educated travellers look for avenues to make leisure stays more sustainable, and with a 'doing' angle to engage more directly in the countryside. 'Agritourism' is more than just staying on a farm, it encompasses all the learning, leisure or even working experiences visitors may enjoy, such as wine/vineyard tours, quad biking, horse riding, fruit picking and opportunities to do voluntary work. We need to partner with the agricultural community to explore this broader potential and facilitate new service provision and growing visitor spend.

UNDERPINNED BY:

Our Authentic Character

- The county’s size and sparse population, along with its location on the border, surrounded by hills, creates a sense of truly getting away from it all;
- Herefordshire offers the ‘real’ rural experience rather than a curated one, it’s a more earthy place, just like our rich red soil;
- Our people are genuinely friendly and true to our roots. Our tourism landscape is dominated by independent businesses which are really focused on giving visitors a wonderful experience in Herefordshire.

Year-Round Cultural Events & Festivals

- Across the year there are cultural events which appeal to a wide range of audiences and a series of established ‘signature’ events which help put Herefordshire on the map, these include Ledbury Poetry Festival, Bromyard Folk Festival, CMYK Festival of Print and Illustration, Ross Beer and Cider Festival, Lakefest, Malverns Classic Mountain Bike Festival, Three Choirs Festival, Hay Festival and events at the Three Counties Showground;
- However it must also be noted that there are challenges in the sector, such as a reliance on the goodwill of volunteers and also rising costs. As a result, in 2025 a number of regular festivals are having a fallow year or simply not returning;
- Cultural events are critical to addressing issues of seasonality as they create new reasons to visit at quieter points in the year. Cultural partners have expressed an appetite to develop the cultural tourism offer, which could include destination-wide thematic programming linked to the overarching brand proposition. For example, a creative interpretation of harvest time in September and October which could link with previous events such as Craft Cider Week and AppleFest. Likewise, the border story has resonance for many partners. Including National Trust and English Heritage;
- There is also the opportunity to work with the market towns, rural venues and attractions to maximise the impact of key events. For example, collaborative marketing, programming of fringe events and themed hotel packages.

Focus on Sustainability

- Green in every sense, from the landscape to the sustainability commitment of Herefordshire Council which has pledged to reduce carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030;
- Regenerative Tourism is the approach favoured by VisitEngland in terms of improving destinations for all and having a positive impact on both the local environment and our communities;
- Our tourism providers and partners are striving to make a real difference and there is an appetite to do more. There is a huge opportunity to learn from one another and to excel in this area.

Open to All

- Herefordshire is keen to welcome all visitors and to champion accessibility, from transport to tourism providers.

3.3 Target Markets

Herefordshire is relatively unknown and has modest resources. It must seize the opportunity to present domestic travellers with a ‘new’ staycation destination.

DOMESTIC TRAVELLERS

In 2024, 77% of Brits planned a staycation and for 42% of them their main break was a staycation. Herefordshire’s core offer aligns with what many domestic travellers are seeking in a holiday destination. The Sykes’ Staycation Index 2024 indicates their most popular destinations and the motivators for travel: Scottish Highlands for stunning scenery, Norfolk for nature and wildlife, Cumbria for walking. Likewise, Skyscanner Travel Trends 2025 says the top experiences determining travellers’ destination choice are food (54%), the natural landscape (49%) and culture (44%).

INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Lack of product and budget pressures make international markets a secondary priority. However, where possible, we will partner with VisitEngland and neighbouring LVEPs to run targeted activity. For instance, taking advantage of cost-effective opportunities to attend relevant events and exhibitions, particularly those aimed at small group tours in specific niches.

Focus themes will be Herefordshire’s cider story, rich border history and church tourism, with the principal markets of interest being USA, France and Germany which are top for volume of visits and spend, according to VisitBritain. Anecdotally, many local providers have highlighted a noticeable increase in Dutch visitors so the Netherlands is also relevant to the county.

PRIMARY MARKETS (DOMESTIC)

Our core target markets are active explorers, cultural explorers and curious families.

Whilst Herefordshire welcomes all visitors, targeting is necessary to ensure that limited budgets are spent wisely. To this end, the primary markets represent those visitors most likely to enjoy a trip to the county.

Segment	Definition	Their needs
ACTIVE EXPLORERS	Aged 25+ solo travellers, couples and groups, through to seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looking for new places to explore on foot, by bike and by canoe• Keen to get off the beaten track• High quality accommodation and food & drink• Sustainable choices are a consideration
CULTURAL EXPLORERS	Aged 25+, solo travellers, couples and groups, through to seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Want to get a feel for local rural life, learn something new and to ‘meet the maker’• Enjoy heritage, the arts and foodie experiences as well as independent places to eat and shop• High quality accommodation is essential• Sustainable choices are a consideration
CURIOUS FAMILIES	Families with school-aged children (up to age 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looking for rural staycations with easy, family-friendly activities in nature• Interested in learning/educational experiences as well as sustainable travel• Distinctive accommodation such as safari tents is particularly appealing

GEOGRAPHICAL TARGETING

Informed by visitor data and regularly reviewed, the initial focus is on those regions which have shown both a propensity to visit, as well as propensity for a higher spend - see 2.0 Tourism Today. In addition, local residents and visiting friends & relatives will be embraced by promotional activity.

Train routes into the county are also relevant, particularly in relation to collaborative marketing projects. With stations in Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster and Colwall, the county is currently served by Great Western Railway, Transport for Wales and West Midlands Railway, with direct connections to Birmingham, Cardiff, Manchester and London.

SECTION 4

Priorities for Action



To achieve the goals, we have identified the following key priorities:

Priority 1: Embed partnership working & advocate for the visitor

Agree and embed new models of partnership working to enable the effective delivery of this DMP, including regular review and updating of this document. Fully engage with the shared vision and focus on building a strong profile for both the LVEP and the visitor economy sector. Advocate for the visitor in all related decisions and projects such as town planning and transport infrastructure. Collect the right data to support benchmarking and decision-making.

Priority 2: Grow the volume of overnight visitors

Overnight visitors make double the contribution to our visitor economy. More accommodation, particularly hotels, is required to facilitate this growth, alongside strong year-round reasons to visit, including new bookable experiences.

Priority 3: Strengthen and extend the renaissance of Hereford

Realise the potential for Hereford to be the jewel in our crown, by partnering with stakeholders to progress place shaping efforts from a tourism perspective and maximise the impact of investments such as the new Hereford Museum & Art Gallery and extension of the National Trust’s Weir Garden. Promote Hereford as a historic, green, riverside city with a thriving, contemporary experience. Look ahead to future initiatives which would enhance the city’s visitor offer.

Priority 4: Reinforce the distinctive destination brand and identity

Make the most of limited resources by achieving recognition for Herefordshire across a small number of uniquely engaging differentiators. Marketing activity will centre on three-night stays, with themed seasonal itineraries and promotional partnerships used to inspire bookings.

Priority 5: Drive forward a regenerative approach to tourism

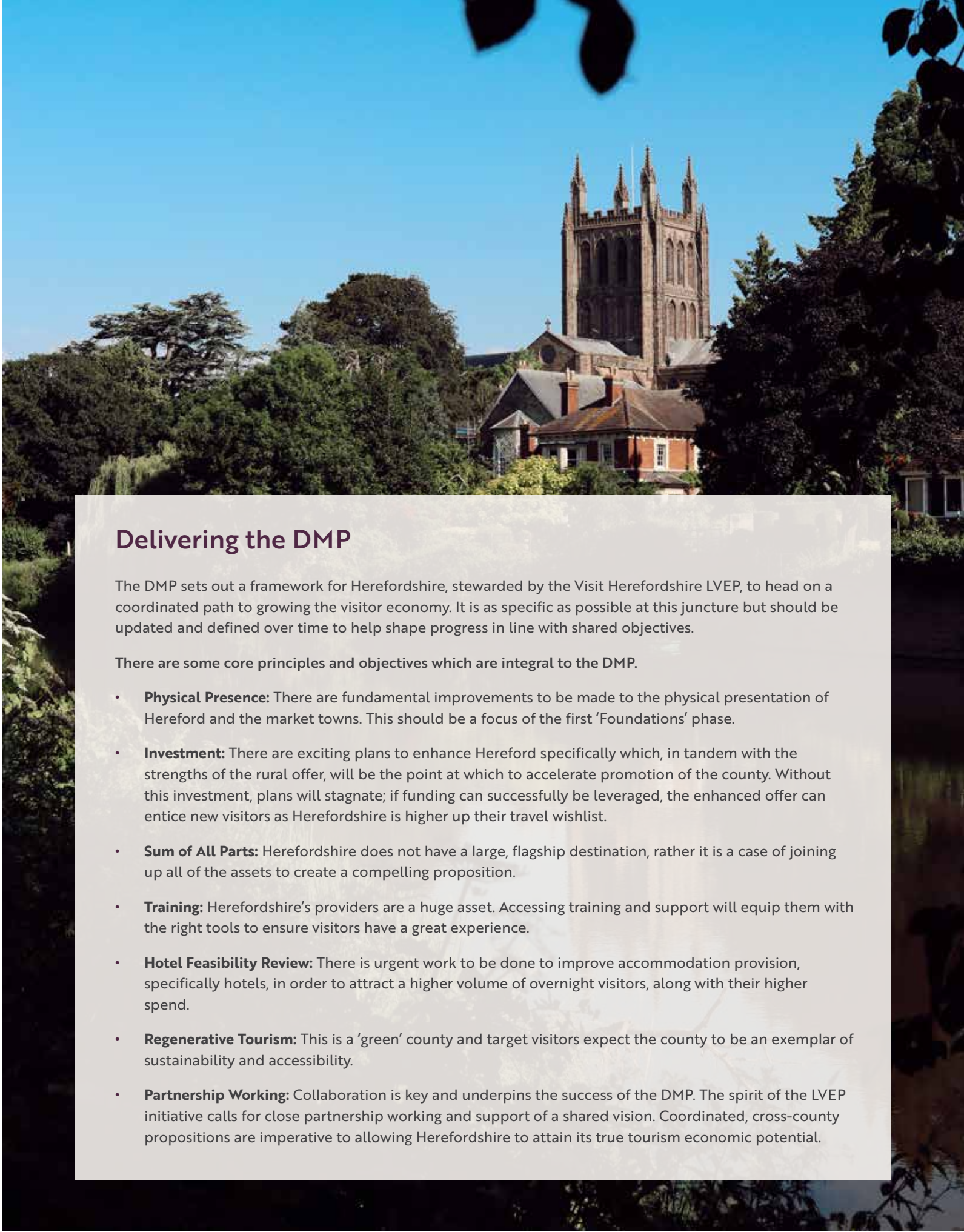
Make a significant contribution to the county’s net zero, nature rich goals; extend a warm welcome to all and ensure tourism acts as a force for good in our local communities.

Priority 6: Nurture our people and businesses

Galvanise the enthusiasm and creative thinking of the sector and provide tailored training and support to strengthen our distinctive visitor offer. Facilitate upskilling, networking and sharing of best practice amongst our providers, alongside taking action to ensure the visitor economy has access to employees with the right skills and mindset.

Priority 7: Get the basics right

Focus in the first instance on transport and infrastructure services, ensure Herefordshire is easy to explore by car, public transport and on foot.



Delivering the DMP

The DMP sets out a framework for Herefordshire, stewarded by the Visit Herefordshire LVEP, to head on a coordinated path to growing the visitor economy. It is as specific as possible at this juncture but should be updated and defined over time to help shape progress in line with shared objectives.

There are some core principles and objectives which are integral to the DMP.

- **Physical Presence:** There are fundamental improvements to be made to the physical presentation of Hereford and the market towns. This should be a focus of the first ‘Foundations’ phase.
- **Investment:** There are exciting plans to enhance Hereford specifically which, in tandem with the strengths of the rural offer, will be the point at which to accelerate promotion of the county. Without this investment, plans will stagnate; if funding can successfully be leveraged, the enhanced offer can entice new visitors as Herefordshire is higher up their travel wishlist.
- **Sum of All Parts:** Herefordshire does not have a large, flagship destination, rather it is a case of joining up all of the assets to create a compelling proposition.
- **Training:** Herefordshire’s providers are a huge asset. Accessing training and support will equip them with the right tools to ensure visitors have a great experience.
- **Hotel Feasibility Review:** There is urgent work to be done to improve accommodation provision, specifically hotels, in order to attract a higher volume of overnight visitors, along with their higher spend.
- **Regenerative Tourism:** This is a ‘green’ county and target visitors expect the county to be an exemplar of sustainability and accessibility.
- **Partnership Working:** Collaboration is key and underpins the success of the DMP. The spirit of the LVEP initiative calls for close partnership working and support of a shared vision. Coordinated, cross-county propositions are imperative to allowing Herefordshire to attain its true tourism economic potential.

