

Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy 2023-2028



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Introduction

This strategy's ambition is to see the value of the Cheshire East Visitor Economy grow to being worth over £1 billion.

By 2025, VisitBritain forecast that Britain will have a tourism industry worth over £257 billion – just under 10% of UK GDP and supporting almost 3.8 million jobs, which is around 11% of the total UK number. The visitor economy not only makes a direct contribution to a local economy but also provides an invaluable indirect economic impact through supporting businesses in the supply chain. One in twelve jobs in the UK is either directly or indirectly supported by tourism. It helps to create attractive places to both live and work in addition to providing wider benefits to local communities; an increased choice of facilities such as places to eat out, local shops, events and exhibitions, as well as conservation of local heritage and the natural landscape.

Cheshire East Council has an important role in developing the visitor economy's local growth potential through strong leadership and providing the catalyst for growth; creating the conditions to thrive, setting the planning context, investing in infrastructure, improving skills and incentivising inward investment. Cheshire East Council can ensure there is a rich cultural offer to attract visitors through the area's events, arts and heritage and helping to support both vibrant towns and the rural setting. The Council also has an important role, along with the Destination Management Organisation, in helping coordinate the activities of stakeholders across the destination.

In partnership with the Council, the visitor economy in Cheshire and Warrington is supported by Marketing Cheshire, the local Destination Management Organisation (DMO), which is part of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The DMO is akin to a local or regional tourist board for a visitor destination and provides a link between local businesses or stakeholders and Visit England as the national tourism board. It produces the Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the sub-region. This is supported and informed by Cheshire East's visitor economy strategy, demonstrating how we are both contributing to achieving a shared vision. Destination marketing also supports 'place marketing' as the destination image helps communicate 'quality of place', raises profile and positions the area among wider audiences including prospective residents and investors.

Visitors tend to visit based on natural geographies and destination attributes rather than administrative boundaries. However, as a council, Cheshire East can use its Visitor Economy Strategy to guide its plans and strategies, helping inform its decisions on this important economic sector. The strategy is intended to reflect the Council's aspirations and help to provide a framework for others to engage with it in addressing the strategic priorities. The strategy helps to articulate the aspirations and priorities of local tourism clusters, sector groups and local plans – economic, rural, cultural, transport, environmental and spatial – to make the most of available capacity and resources.

Cheshire East Council plays a leadership role in capitalising on our local visitor economy's growth potential by creating the conditions for it to thrive and to attract visitors. However, there are further opportunities to support growth and increase productivity through increasing opportunities for visitor spend and by turning day visits into overnight stays. Cheshire East can achieve this through giving visitors a high value offer and investing in the wider destination, helping to develop the place image and supporting brands to strengthen the pull of the area, improving access to suitable transport and working in partnership to improve the conditions for the visitor economy to grow.

Background

Cheshire East has an exciting and evolving tourism product. Jodrell Bank is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and opened its new visitor centre 'First Light' in 2022; Tatton Park was the 5th most visited paid-for attraction in England in a year when attractions were significantly affected by the pandemic¹. There is accessible countryside from riverside walks to the Peak District National Park and market towns including Macclesfield, Congleton, Knutsford and Nantwich. This combined with high-quality accommodation, heritage attractions and historic gardens, world class events, farm-stays and health-club spas to provide a comprehensive offer for both day visitors and staying visitors alike.

Cheshire East is also ideally positioned in relation to the cities of Manchester, Liverpool and Chester as well as the neighbouring counties of Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Shropshire. Cheshire East also includes part of the Peak District National Park and offers access to both domestic and international markets with two international airports nearby and excellent links by road and rail from other parts of the country. Our restaurants, bars, cafes, theatres, museums, tourist attractions and retail destinations play an important part in the leisure experience for residents, visitors and business. Our visitor economy brings in much-needed revenue to the borough, boosting its economy, supporting our 'Quality of Place' and helping to position the borough as part of place marketing.

Since 2009 Cheshire East has worked with local and national partners to develop the visitor economy to the benefit of visitors and residents. We have seen increases in the quality of events; increases in quality accommodation; new tourist attractions and a growth in employment within the sector. Cheshire East is seen as a visitor destination for day visits and increasingly for overnight stays and is in a good position to benefit from the staycation trends.

The previous Visitor Economy Strategy (2016-2020) focused on quality of place; infrastructure; dwell time; skills and investment and pre-covid witnessed a continued growth in the economic value of the visitor economy to £994m. The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted that growth with a substantial reduction in the value of the visitor economy across the UK. Cheshire East Council produced a Tourism Recovery Plan² in September 2021 which focused on measures to assist the sector to survive and recover through targeted support between 2021 -23. The aim was to ensure that we had a growing and recovering sector in the short term ahead of developing a new strategy.

A Cheshire East Business Consultation (App 1) has shown that there is an opportunity to adopt a thematic approach through the strategy delivery around promotion and product development. Apart from an excellent geographical position with good connectivity providing access to new markets, Cheshire East is well positioned to exploit key themes including:

- Outdoor experiences
- Friends and family
- Wellness
- Treats and Celebrations
- Lifestyle and culture
- Sustainable and green

¹ Visit England Annual Attractions Survey 2021

² [Cheshire East Tourism Recovery Plan](#)

Strategic Context

Quality of Place: Culture, environment, lifestyle and visitor attractors are fundamental to the wider 'quality of place' proposition and help to provide a setting of choice for people to live, work and invest in the region as well as to visit. Cheshire East boasts a very high quality of place offering that needs to be both maintained and enhanced. Cheshire East is a 'place of places' where town meets country to provide an unsurpassed quality of life and a distinctive character, there are thriving market towns and village communities, ideally positioned close to major centres of Manchester and Liverpool and within easy reach of the Midlands. It is an active place, with room to breathe, on the edge of the Peak district, yet within easy reach of nearby City centres. There is an enviable network of open spaces, countryside, cycle ways and waterways in an accessible rural landscape stretching from the Peak District to the Cheshire Plain. A focus on quality of place will benefit the visitor economy and vice versa, whilst helping to attract talent to the region. These people then become local consumers of the visitor economy. There is a need to retain the characteristics that support existing success and build on those that help attract future prosperity.

Infrastructure and connectivity: Cheshire is already well placed with two international airports close by, good access to and from cities and major road and rail links. Facilitating and enhancing connectivity will continue to be a vital contributor to the success of the visitor economy. There is still further potential with improvements planned to motorway and road access as well as the longer-term opportunities around HS2 and a Crewe hub. Links within Cheshire East are just as important in providing infrastructure that supports the visitor economy, whether road, rail, public transport, or public rights of way. A continuing roll-out of broadband to 'hard to reach' areas and improvement of mobile connectivity will produce significant benefits, particularly in these rural areas.

Skills: The development of skills, career paths, recruitment and retention were all difficult issues for the tourism and hospitality sector pre-covid. However, the difficulties experienced by businesses have been exacerbated by people leaving the sector during the pandemic, with many people finding alternative jobs and not returning. While this is not unique to tourism and hospitality, the impact has been particularly severe, affecting business costs, levels of service and ability to fully open. It is the ambition of this strategy that the council, hospitality businesses and local education providers can work together to address the skills required for hospitality in Cheshire East as well as the information and ambassadors to change perceptions of the sector long term.

Audiences and dwell time: Consultation with Cheshire East Tourism & Hospitality businesses undertaken as part of this strategy development research indicates that couples over 55+ are the current primary audience in Cheshire, followed by couples aged 24 to 44 and families and business visitors (App 2). At present visitors to Cheshire mainly come from within Cheshire and the North West. There may be further work required to understand and realise the opportunities South of Cheshire, in particular from the Midlands. Positioning Cheshire as a multi-generational location while also focussing on the 55+ market should be a priority, as well as promoting Cheshire as a family-friendly location. There is a need to promote a better understanding of the Cheshire offer, including, but not limited to, the family audience and outdoor experiences. Further promotion of Cheshire to both domestic and international staying visitors should sit alongside continued promotion of the day visit offering.

Whilst Visit Britain, Visit England and research agencies such as the Audience Agency provide national and regional data, the focus on developing and procuring data specific to Cheshire could help support priorities and develop strategies moving forward. 'Big data' has transformed the tourism industry over the last few years, helping with analysis of traveller trends and allowing development of marketing strategies specific to target audiences.

Insight gained through the strategy development research with Cheshire East businesses show that additional research on visitor behaviors, consumer trends and economic impact data would assist greatly their ability to make commercial decisions and to guide their audience development. (App 1)

A changing landscape for the Visitor Economy

While many of the thematic priorities identified in the last Visitor Economy Strategy may remain valid, there have been significant changes to the context in which these may be viewed and some fundamental shifts in the visitor market. The new strategy will need to reflect economic recovery from the pandemic, any impact of changes due to Brexit, impacts of climate change and the impact of changes in the cost of living.

Covid 19: Cheshire East's visitor economy was on track to be worth over £1bn by 2020, having reached a value of £994m in 2019. However, the impacts of the pandemic badly hit the sector, with a particular impact on the rural area where much of the tourism infrastructure is based. In actual fact, as a direct impact of the pandemic and the restrictions that applied, the visitor economy shrank to a value of £548m in 2020. Cheshire East Council supported businesses throughout the pandemic with advice, promotion, and the distribution of Government grants. There were several grant schemes specifically targeted at supporting tourism and hospitality businesses. In financial year 2020-21 the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant scheme made payments to 1680 businesses totalling £31,506,939, the Christmas Support Payment Scheme made payments to 274 businesses totalling £274,000, in 2021-22 the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant made payments to 745 businesses totalling £2,641,462. Additionally, the Council approved a Tourism Recovery Plan in 2021 and has been instrumental in developing a programme to help address the staff and skills shortages in the sector.

Covid is still with us and although people feel the worst has passed it is believed COVID will still be around for the foreseeable future. Outdoor activities are still preferred, with walking and hiking the most preferred activity. Countryside trips are top choices (along with seaside towns) for overnight breaks, with some evidence that people are less inclined to choose crowded areas including cities.

The North-West (along with Yorkshire) is the second most popular destination after the South-West for short breaks post Covid. Cheshire East is well positioned to capitalise on people's intent to visit the North-West for overnight countryside experiences. However, as shown below, the rising cost of living is reported to be as much of a barrier to overnight trips as Covid.

Cost of Living: In March 2022, The Office for National Statistics reported 9 in 10 people highlighting that their cost of living has increased³ and among these adults, the most common reasons reported were an increase in the price of food, an increase in gas or electricity bills and an increase in the price of fuel. The most common actions in relation to the increases was through spending less on non-essentials, using less fuel and cutting back on non-essential journeys in their vehicle whilst also shopping around more.

Additionally, Visit England⁴ have reported that 75% of UK adults currently believe the worst is still to come, whilst 47% feel they have to be careful, with a further 22% saying they've already been hit hard. The research shows that the barriers to overnight UK trips include the rising cost of living,

³ The rising cost of living and its impact on individuals in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

⁴ [Domestic Sentiment Tracker | VisitBritain](#)

followed by personal finances and the cost of fuel.

The Audience Agency⁵ also confirm that the cost-of-living crisis is emerging as a predictable barrier to engagement in cultural experiences and is particularly likely to affect frequency of attendance.

Moving forward, it is clear that businesses need to offer value for money experiences. The business survey undertaken as part of the strategy research indicated that the cost-of-living crisis is affecting businesses hard, due to lower visitor numbers and increased overheads. Businesses have been using ticket deals and value for money messages to offset the impact.

Climate change: Cheshire's countryside will be even more vital to the prosperity and health of our residents and visitors and brings opportunities for tourism as well as healthier lifestyles for local people.

COVID has accelerated a trend towards greater visitor use of the countryside and the Public Rights of Way network (PROW), however this has challenged these spaces at a time when climate change is increasing vulnerability to wear and tear and damage from extreme weather events. Our changing climate is requiring us to do things differently – this means reducing use of hydrocarbons, increasing sequestration of carbon already in the atmosphere, and ensuring resilience to the impacts of climate change. The Government has set a legally binding target for the UK to reduce greenhouse gases to 'net zero' by 2050 and in October 2021 published its Net Zero Strategy⁶ setting out decarbonisation pathways and supporting policies and programmes to reduce emissions for each sector plus some cross-cutting actions.

Cheshire East Council has a target of achieving net-zero by 2025 and has joined UK100 (Countryside Climate Network) with a pledge to support the borough achieving net-zero by 2045. There are also sub-regional perspectives⁷, and there is also a need and requirement to work with visitor economy businesses to guide and inform in their quest to reduce their environmental impact.

Strategic themes and priorities

The visitor economy strategy identifies a number of thematic priorities for the next period which have featured throughout extensive consultation with Cheshire East Visitor Economy Businesses. Additionally, an in-depth desk-based analysis of national travel and tourism research was carried out (App 1). These are strategic priorities that should be considered by the Council, Destination Management Organisation and businesses to address current issues and help to position the Cheshire East visitor economy for recovery and future growth.

1. Position Cheshire East as a destination of choice for staycations – both day & staying visits.

Britain is continuing to benefit from a strong focus on domestic holidays, often referred to as a 'staycation'. 2021 was a record-breaking year for staycations companies such as Sykes Cottages saw the highest volume of bookings in their history, with a 57% increase year-on-year. According to the Sykes Cottages latest study⁸, 77% of people plan to enjoy at least one holiday at home this year – with 46% planning to choose the UK for their main summer break.

⁵ Cultural Participation Monitor Findings Spring 2022 | The Audience Agency

⁶ Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener

⁷ 'Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission

⁸ Sykes Cottages Staycation Index 2022⁷⁷

The way we are holidaying has changed significantly. Last-minute breaks are more common than ever, while environmental concerns are increasingly playing into our holiday decisions.

There has been a positive increase in the average daily room rate for accommodation providers in Cheshire East, from pre-pandemic rates of £67 in June 2019 to £80 in June 2022⁹

According to the Audience Agency, the most prominent Audience Spectrum segments¹⁰ in the North-West are 'Facebook Families', 'Trips & Treats', and 'Dormitory Dependable'. 49% of the target population belong to one of these three and all three include a family unit.

The Cheshire East Business consultation indicates that 34% of those intending to visit the North-West are families and 37% are older independents¹¹. This represents an even split of families and older independents, with resilient 'empty nesters' an important demographic.

By 2026¹², almost a quarter of the UK's population will be aged 65 or over. They are also one of the most affluent demographics within society, therefore Cheshire East and its partners will include this demographic as a priority within our overall targeting.

In order to continue to attract domestic visitors, Cheshire East needs to continually develop and improve its core product. This may be by working with businesses or as part of town and community-based development plans. As part of this, it is important to grow and enhance the cultural events programme as a distinctive part of the offer, both for visitors and residents.

In summary to address this priority the key objectives are:

- *To position Cheshire East as a staycation destination of choice for short breaks and day trips through effective and targeted PR and marketing*
- *To define staycation propositions in Cheshire East more closely related to the target markets and to identify gaps and opportunities in the product that would further increase the attractiveness of Cheshire East as a destination*
- *To work with Destination Cheshire on defining the Cheshire 'story' and brand more clearly*
- *To identify and support existing major events in Cheshire East, and support the attraction of new events and experiences that contribute to place distinctiveness.*

2. Consideration of new, emerging and changing trends in the Cheshire visitor economy

The Visitor Economy landscape is rapidly changing and many of the emerging trends provide opportunities for Cheshire East to its share of tourism within the UK. Opportunities, such as those highlighted below, give rural and semi-rural destinations a chance to profile the area and attractions as the place to visit. Cheshire East has the potential to capitalise on a number of market trends which the area could be well positioned to exploit. For example:

⁹ STR Hotel occupancy report 2022

¹⁰ Audience Agency North-West Area Profile Report

¹¹ [Visit Britain Sentiment Tracker](#)

¹² Strutt and Parker

Continued growth in self-catering, glamping, camping and caravanning accommodation sectors

The latest STEAM¹³ figures for Cheshire East show that the non-serviced accommodation sector is currently growing quicker than the serviced sector. It shows that June – October 2021 was the highest figures recorded. Even higher than the pre-COVID records of June – October 2019.

Cheshire East has an amazing array of self-catering properties, however there is a need to increase its numbers and profile in the 'outdoor' accommodation arena with an increase in quality Glamping, Caravan & Camping sites. Consumers are looking for outdoor rural breaks rather than city Centre breaks and this is anticipated to continue at least in the medium term. Cheshire is perfectly positioned to take advantage in this staycation boom. And these visitors will assist the economy of the rural area and potentially link it with the many and varied walking and cycling trails in Cheshire East.

While demand for traditional accommodation categories shows no sign of waning, Canopy & Stars¹⁴ state that glamping is stepping out of the shade and becoming a substantial sector of the travel market. With this growth comes a move away from its glamorous camping origins, towards something more sophisticated and professional that nonetheless keeps a connection to nature at its heart. Recent global events are shaping consumer habits and driving further change but glamping, even though the word itself may soon be obsolete, still contains enormous potential for growth. This in turn brings big-budget competition, higher guest expectations and the welcome challenge of greater scrutiny on social and environmental responsibility.

Camping pods are appearing everywhere, and other types of glamping – from safari tents to yurts – are attracting media attention the world over. These developments have not only appealed to new, more affluent customers but also increased choice, making sites less dependent on the weather and a year-round season a reality.

The recent increase in staycations has also highlighted a lack of facilities for camping, caravans and motorcaravans nationwide and uncovered a long-term problem with the current UK network of Campsites. There are currently over 386,000 registered motorcaravans in the UK and over 2 million in Europe. Additionally, with the advent of BREXIT many UK motorhome owners can only spend 90 days out of 180 days in Europe. This when added to the current price of fuel means that many more are looking to explore the UK rather than mainland Europe.

As a destination, Cheshire East is under-represented in this market, with very few secure motorcaravan locations. Motorhomes & campervans (motorcaravans) can only stay if they can get access to fresh water and facilities for black water waste every few days and with little or no investment Cheshire East could provide a valuable resource to the thousands of motorhome owners whilst creating a new source of income year-round.

Whilst continuing to promote the quality hotel offer in Cheshire East, there are particular opportunities to showcase our self-catering, glamping, camping & caravanning offer as offering both value for money and quality. This can be linked with the outdoor offer including walks & cycling, along with itineraries around places to visit & places to eat & drink.

¹³ Scarborough Tourism Economic Analysis Monitor

¹⁴ [The Canopy & Stars Glamping Market Report 2022 | Canopy & Stars \(canopyandstars.co.uk\)](https://www.canopyandstars.co.uk)

Consumer focus on health and wellbeing

The Global Wellness Institute defines wellness tourism as travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one's personal wellbeing. Cheshire East has an opportunity to maximise the potential of this trend for the benefit of its businesses as visitors like to take short breaks, tend to travel in the off-peak season and are usually high spending, making them a prime target for growth. Cheshire East is home to award winning spa hotels; beautiful open spaces; scores of well-maintained cycling and walking routes and many picture-perfect market towns.

Continued appeal of outdoor experiences

A greater share of the population feels comfortable visiting predominantly outdoor destinations, such as gardens, country parks and castles, than the original pre-pandemic norm. This reinforces the sense that a positive legacy of the pandemic may be a more widespread love of nature and the outdoors. Crucial to this is the family element, where visitors really value family time in rural locations¹⁵.

An increased interest in visiting gardens, the countryside and walking trails means that Cheshire East is well positioned to benefit from its wealth of historic gardens, its country parks, its canal network, the Peak district fringe and its walking routes, such as the Gritstone or Sandstone trails.

Visiting Friends & Relatives and the importance of community and reconnecting

Given the extended lockdown during the pandemic, visiting friends and relatives (VFR) is now a high priority for people who haven't been in touch for a long time. The top motivations for a domestic overnight trip¹⁶ are 48% family time, 39% to get away from it all, 22% to be outdoors, 19% to spend time with friends. Travelling for people instead of places become a more important motivator for travel than pre-pandemic. It is important to emphasise human connections and shared experiences in your communications¹⁷

One of the additional positive impacts of the pandemic is that people are looking for local experiences and are spending more time with communities. They are putting the community and authenticity-in-culture activities at the heart of the travel experience.

Increase in blended travel

The advent of digital platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams has given people the ability to work from anywhere and this is enabling potential travellers to cover multiple purposes on their trips, from visiting friends and relatives (VFR) to deciding to work whilst on an extended break or holiday. This has resulted in multi-purpose or blended travel. As a result, the duration of travel and the length of stay are longer¹⁸. Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts has explored the blended travel landscape, finding that it includes travellers tagging leisure time on to work trips, spending longer in

¹⁵ [Visit Britain](#)

¹⁶ [World Economic Forum](#)

¹⁷ [Think With Google](#)

¹⁸ [World Economic Forum](#)

a holiday destination to work, or simply harnessing the benefits of advanced connectivity and desirable destinations¹⁹.

Dog ownership and the rise of 'Paw-cations'

The number of dogs kept as pets in the United Kingdom (UK) increased significantly during the first lockdowns and was estimated at 13 million in 2020/21 with 34% of households owning a pet dog. This constitutes a marked increase from a decade earlier in 2010/11, when the dog population in the UK was around 7.6 million²⁰. Sykes Cottages also report that so far in 2022, 35% of their bookings include dogs. Up year on year from 33% in 2021. Cheshire has a range of dog friendly attractions, with over 34 dog friendly attractions on the Visit Chester and Cheshire website. Cheshire is in an ideal position to promote and grow a 'dog friendly' market.

Getting ready to benefit from international travel as it recovers

For 2022, inbound visits are forecast to increase to 21.1 million, and spending to £16.9 billion. These are 52% and 59% respectively of the visits and spend levels seen in 2019²¹. This is echoed by the number of visits abroad made by UK residents increased between April 2021 and April 2022 but were still just two-thirds of the pre-pandemic number²².

In summary to address this priority the key objectives are:

- *To work with tourism businesses to help maintain and disseminate information on changing market trends and opportunities*
- *To incorporate changing and emerging markets into destination marketing activity, working with Destination Cheshire and key partners.*
- *To establish new travel trade propositions and work with gateway destinations to grow international visitors to Cheshire East.*
- *To build on town vitality plans and identify how Cheshire East towns and villages and rural areas can capitalise on new and changing trends.*
- *To encourage investment that helps to realise the potential of new or emerging markets that are relevant to Cheshire East.*

3. Develop initiatives focused on sustainability & the green agenda to support business growth & extend options for consumers

Covid has produced a dramatic shift in how we work, travel, holiday and socialise. While some indicators have returned to pre-pandemic levels such as cars on UK roads, others have not. Recent estimates²³ indicate a 27% reduction in the number of UK residents travelling overseas in May 2022 compared to May 2019. These behaviours are exactly what regulators were trying to nudge society towards in order for us to meet our collective net-zero targets.

Sustainability is accelerating at pace within the tourism sector. Consumers increasingly believe acting in an environmentally responsible way is the right thing to do and are actively choosing brands and

¹⁹ Crown Plaza

²⁰ Statista.

²¹ Visit Britain

²² Office for National Statistics

²³ Office of National Statistics

destinations that match their ideals. Booking.com's annual sustainable travel report²⁴ revealed that 71% of UK travellers confirm that sustainable travel is important to them (a 10% increase on 2021). A third say they have stayed in sustainable accommodation over the past year and 62% intend to do so at least once in the coming year. The research indicated an increasing desire to make more conscious choices across the entire travel experience, from transportation to accommodation. Some 23% of respondents said they chose to travel to a destination closer to home in order to reduce their carbon footprint, and 14% said they had researched public transport or options to rent a bicycle at their chosen destination.

In May 2019, Cheshire East Council committed to becoming carbon neutral as a council by 2025²⁵ and committed to raising awareness of the importance of taking action to combat climate change across the borough. In January 2022, the Council joined the UK100 network – pledging to make the borough carbon neutral by 2045. Many Cheshire East businesses already understand the importance of taking measures to reduce their impact on the climate and improve their resilience, however they require support and guidance going forward. At the recent Caterer Summit, discussions centred around how sustainability is not something any of us can ignore. Consumers are thinking planet-first, and businesses who are proactively helping to reverse the effects of climate change need to be communicating these efforts to attract and retain customers.

As a destination, Cheshire East need to ensure consumers can access tourism facilities via sustainable travel where possible & have a clear understanding of the sustainability of Cheshire East as a visitor destination. However, businesses also require information and direction around sustainability schemes, accreditation and finance. (App 2).

In summary to address this priority the key objectives are:

- *Cheshire East Council with support from partners will provide a central resource around case studies, training, events, certification schemes and promotion to assist Cheshire East businesses transitioning to green alternatives*
- *In partnership, Cheshire East Council will develop events, seminars and on-line communications to guide businesses in their sustainability journey*
- *In partnership, Cheshire East Council will assist businesses to market their green credentials.*

4. Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity are prioritised in tourism development in Cheshire East.

Visit Britain estimate that one in five people in the UK have an impairment, which may affect where they choose to stay or visit. There is a compelling business case for making tourism destinations, venues and experiences inclusive, and people with health conditions & impairments and their travelling companions spend around £15.3 billion on trips in England each year, taking longer trips and are anecdotally very loyal to places that meet their requirements²⁶.

²⁴ [Booking.com 2022 Sustainable Travel Report | GSTC \(gstcouncil.org\)](#)

²⁵ [Carbon Neutral Council \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁶ [Developing accessible destinations | VisitBritain](#)

Making a destination more accessible will naturally improve visitor satisfaction, encourage repeat bookings and boost positive word-of-mouth. It can also help local businesses, and the destination as a whole, maximise market opportunities and improve the quality of every visitor's experience.

Better access to attractions, website information and customers. There are plenty of ways Cheshire East can better handle the support needs of its visitors. Information is key, with research showing 83% of people who look for access information when planning a trip will use destination websites. But only 39% find this information easily.

In summary to address this priority the key objectives are:

- *Cheshire East Council with support from Visit Britain and partners will implement a 'Destination Audit' to provide insights into the experiences of disabled visitors to Cheshire East*
- *With partners, develop the Visit Cheshire website to provide good access information to make our destination more competitive.*
- *To provide relevant information around accessibility and inclusion to Cheshire East Visitor Economy businesses; including meeting the audience needs, myth busting, best practice and quick wins*
- *Ensure with partners that Destination Marketing ensures all customers, regardless of any access requirements or specific characteristics, feel welcomed.*

5. Working together with business to address staff shortage, recruitment, and retention in the Hospitality sector

Recent UK Hospitality and Cheshire East Council research has confirmed widespread reports of an acute staff shortage in various roles within the Hospitality sector, particularly front of house and chef roles. In many Cheshire East businesses this is preventing sites opening or forcing businesses to restrict their trading hours or the menu and service they can offer. There are a variety of reasons for the current shortage:

- Many staff who left the sector during COVID have not returned
- Perception of Hospitality as a career is poor
- A feeling that the sector is susceptible to another lockdown
- There is now a finite number of people available to work in the UK and only 1 in 5 of people in the UK would consider working in hospitality²⁷.
- 97% of school-aged children and recent school leavers across the UK have already written off working in the industry as a career option²⁸. Many hotels have had to cap occupancy and event levels because there are simply not enough staff to provide the service – a real availability frustration for event bookers.

Cheshire East Council will lead on a sub-regional approach to 'Hospitality Skills & Recruitment' that is looking to address issues around recruitment, perception, training and skills. This project will identify opportunities for 'hard to reach' potential employees to be matched with vacancies in the sector. Added to this, long-term strategies will be prepared around skills, perception, careers advice and education.

²⁷ [UK Hospitality](#)

²⁸ [caterer.com](#)

There is a real stigma surrounding hospitality careers in the UK which can be traced to an emphasis on academic over vocational training. Improving perceptions of the sector is vital and Hospitality Businesses need to play their part, including the development of transferrable skills, flexible work hours and the prospect of rapid promotion.

Business research shows that skills, salary expectations, progression and unsociable hours are listed as some of the biggest challenges in terms of recruitment and staffing. Although hospitality jobs may be seen as suiting young people in pursuit of part-time work, the strategy seeks to boost inclusivity across the age groups.

As part of the Tourism Recovery and the new Strategy a number of actions are required to assist the Hospitality sector in Cheshire East to increase the number of new recruits into their business through identified training support package.

- To ensure new recruits into the hospitality sector have basic hospitality training around COSHH, Food Safety, Natasha's Law; Relationships with Customers and Working in a team
- To assist businesses to 'upskill' current employees to cover hard to recruit vacancy areas
- To reduce unemployment within Cheshire as well as providing opportunities to 'hard to reach' groups specific to Cheshire East, widening the labour pool in Cheshire East whilst increasing the access to potential employees utilising non-traditional routes.

There will also be a focus designed to boost collaboration between the Hospitality Sector, Public Sector, schools, colleges and universities, along with broader measures to improve perceptions of the sector as an employer, introduce new qualifications and grow the pool of available workers in the economy. Attracting new people to the sector and changing the overall perception of Hospitality as a real and meaningful career in hospitality is crucial for a sustainable sector.

In summary to address this priority the key objectives are:

- *To develop a sub-regional approach to 'Hospitality Skills & Recruitment' before the end of 2023 to address issues around recruitment, perception, training and skills and to identify opportunities for 'hard to reach' potential employees to be matched with vacancies in the sector.*
- *From 2023, support opportunities to increase the number of new recruits into the sector through development of a training support package.*
- *Work to strengthen the appeal of tourism and hospitality as a career through collaboration between the Hospitality Sector, Public Sector, schools, colleges and universities, to help improve perceptions of the sector as an employer, develop appropriate qualifications, ambassador schemes and career development to grow the pool of available workers in the economy.*

6. Evolve the Business visits and events market in Cheshire East as part of a wider place-based strategy across Cheshire and Warrington

The impact of COVID-19 continues to impact this important market; however, there are clear signs of a steady recovery. There was increased demand from September 2021 for smaller, domestic meetings and events as well as a further upturn of larger face-to-face events taking place from the beginning of 2022. Sustainability and virtual and hybrid events impact the future shape of the industry. However, the pandemic allowed time for Cheshire East businesses to focus on their offer and the meeting product has evolved to meet future requirements.

Hoteliers and meetings and events venues made it very clear that 2021 and 2022 have seen high social event demand²⁹. This pent-up demand is not surprising considering the social impact of the pandemic. Interestingly, event agency officials also talked positively of high leisure demand because there is a demand to get back to travelling and to experiences.

The same report also identified a shift where nearly 60% of bookers would pick a more expensive venue to meet their sustainability requirements. FTSE 100 companies will have to report on their sustainability and what they are doing to drive down emissions as part of UK law, so corporates will be under pressure to ensure their events are green and don't use up all their carbon credits

Prior to COVID, there had been a focus on attracting conferences and events to Cheshire East, especially those aligned to our sector strengths, for example Life Sciences. Additionally, a new website was launched; Meet in Chester & Cheshire³⁰ focussed solely on showcasing the Cheshire offer.

The Cheshire East Business Consultation also highlighted a need to attract larger conferences to the area, including the requirement to educate conference buyers of the Cheshire East offer, including Cheshire's excellent transport links. It was felt that using strategic sites to attract travel trade should be a priority, and businesses were keen to raise awareness of Cheshire as a whole.

In Cheshire and Warrington, the Cheshire Science Corridor is a strategic opportunity to raise the profile of the sub-region as a place to invest, focused on the world leading science taking place within the sub-region alongside the high quality of life offer. This also has the potential to drive business tourism into Cheshire East as businesses can play an ambassadorial role to attract association conferences linked to their scientific field.

In summary to address this priority the key objectives are:

- *To work with partners to provide business with case studies, products, services and information relating to sustainability for the meetings and events industry.*
- *To participate in the development of the Cheshire Science Corridor as a means to attract science-based association conferences*
- *To raise the profile of the Cheshire East offer to regional, national and International Conference buyers of the Cheshire East offer.*

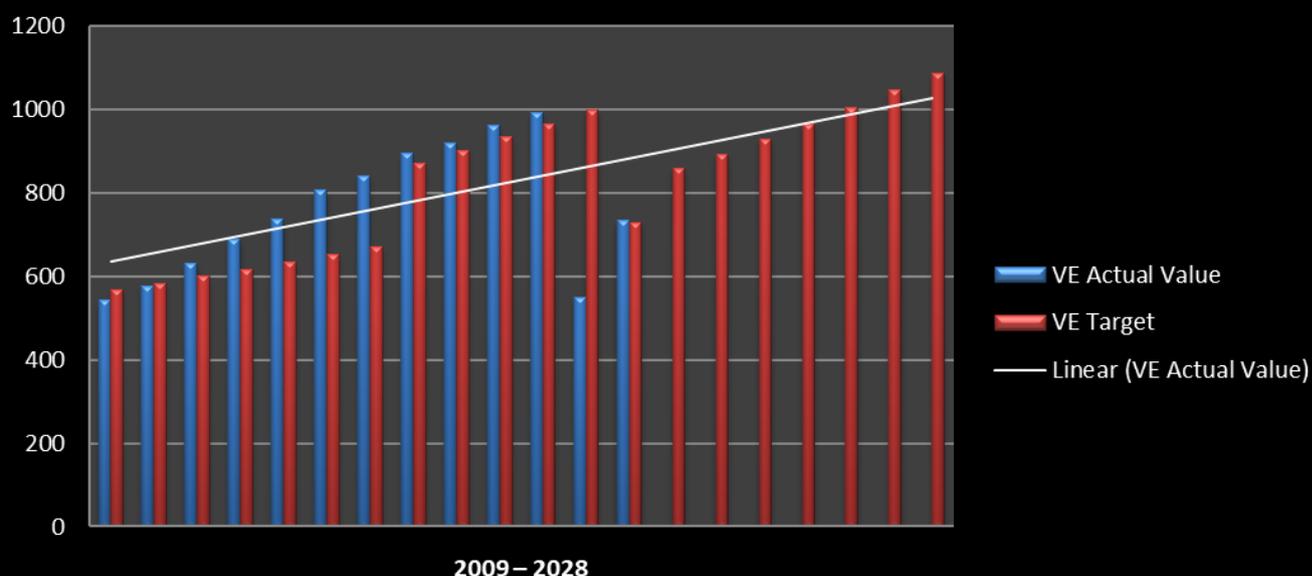
Monitoring and evaluation

We will also continue to provide annual data around the value and importance of the visitor economy in Cheshire East through the STEAM Data and monitor trends on hotel occupancy and performance. Cheshire East will additionally seek ways to collect data on the self-catering sector to ensure, along with hotel data, we understand the current position of the market and can inform future strategy. Other business data, town centre footfall, attractions data, consumer sentiment and feedback will be collected where available to inform plans and the development of future strategy.

²⁹ [BVA/BDRC Meeting and Events State of the Nation](#)

³⁰ [Meetings, Conferences and Events in Chester and Cheshire - Cheshire and Warrington](#)

Value of the Visitor Economy to Cheshire East (£m)



Targets

YEAR	VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY IN CHESHIRE EAST
2022	£860m
2023	£894m
2024	£930m
2025	£967m
2026	£1.006bn
2027	£1.046bn
2028	£1.088bn

Working together for Cheshire East's visitor economy

This strategy provides a strategic framework for Cheshire East Council, Tourism and Hospitality businesses, Visitor Economy partner organisations, Cheshire East Town & Parish Councils and other stakeholders to work together to grow and develop Cheshire east's visitor economy. Each has a role to play to generate the benefits that the visitor economy can bring, supporting a thriving and sustainable place that is a great place for people to live, work and visit. It addresses the future strategic direction and priorities for the period 2023-2028, with an aspiration to grow the value of the visitor economy and contribute to the borough's wider economic growth.

Cheshire East Council continues to play a leadership role in supporting our local visitor economy's growth potential. However, the council cannot deliver the growth aspirations on its own. Working in partnership with Marketing Cheshire, our Destination Management Organisation (DMO), we can build on the activities of businesses and stakeholders across the destination. Business networks such as Destination Cheshire can help to share, intelligence and best practice, coordinate effort and build a strong offer for visitors. Our common goal is to continue to develop a successful and distinctive offer for visitors that translates into growth in our visitor economy.

Appendix 1 - Consultation

Over 20 Cheshire East Tourism and Hospitality businesses were interviewed regarding the strategic priorities. Discussions centered around:

- Business type and location
- Themes to attract visitors to the area
- Visitor profiles
- Priority markets for Cheshire
- Destination data to help guide businesses decisions
- Sustainability and the green agenda
- Recruitment and staffing challenges
- Business visits, conferencing and events
- Strategic sites and the travel trade market
- Impact of Covid and the cost-of-living crisis
- Other priorities and observations

Desk Based Research Study - Insight gained included:

- **Staycations** are here to stay, with outdoor experiences a key beneficiary of the pandemic.
- **Visiting friends & relatives** is still a top priority, with visitors prioritising people as well as places.
- **Families are a prominent audience** in Cheshire along with the resilient & affluent 55+ market.
- **Community-based tourism** is at the heart of the travel experience & the sharing of local experiences is now even more important.
- **Wellness is top of mind** for travelers since the pandemic, with the rural environment being key to promoting good mental health & physical wellbeing.
- **Inclusive marketing** - 1 in 5 people are disabled & the accessible tourism market in England is worth c£15 billion. Providing detailed, accurate accessibility information is essential.
- **Blended travel** (combining travel & work) means people are staying longer, with multi-purpose visits combining leisure & business.
- **Rise in dog ownership** - 34% of households own a pet dog & are looking for pet friendly accommodation & activities.
- **Staff shortages are a major concern**, with competitive salaries, mentoring, tackling immigration & changing perceptions seen as potential solutions.
- **Business meetings & events have been forced to evolve**, with businesses keen to get back to face-to-face events that are easy to book.
- **People are eager to get back together at cultural events** but are more likely to stay local & attend fewer due to the cost-of-living crisis.
- **International travel remains down from pre-pandemic levels &** is unlikely to recover until 2025, but some travelers are staying longer, upgrading & treating themselves.
- **Investment in quality data, in particular 'big data'**, could help identify & capitalise on future tourism trends & opportunities for Cheshire.
- **Sustainability & the green agenda is an emerging driver of importance**, especially to the younger traveler.
- **The cost-of-living crisis means people are cutting back & shopping around**, meaning businesses need to focus on value-for-money experiences.
- **Covid is still affecting our attitudes to travel** with people favouring outdoor & countryside experiences, making Cheshire East is a top choice for short breaks.

Websites used during the research

1. [Audience Agency Audience Spectrum](#)
2. [Alva](#)
3. [Bain Air Travel Forecast](#)
4. [BVA-BDRC](#)
5. [Clearsight](#)
6. [Crown Plaza Blended Travel](#)
7. [Caterer.com](#)
8. [Event Bright](#)
9. [Meetings and Events State of the Nation](#)
10. [National Workforce Strategy](#)
11. [Office for National Statistics](#)
12. [Strutt and Parker Consumer Trends](#)
13. [SNAPTRIP](#)
14. [Sykes Cottages Staycation Index 2022](#)
15. [Statista Pet Ownership](#)
16. [The Tourism Society](#)
17. [Think with Google](#)
18. [Travel Trade Consultancy](#)
19. [UK Hospitality](#)
20. [Visit Britain - Engaging and retaining new customers](#)
21. [Visit Britain Sentiment Tracker](#)
22. [Visit Britain Visitor Segmentation](#)
23. [Visit Britain Inclusive Marketing](#)
24. [World Economic Forum](#)
25. [World Tourism Organisation World Tourism Barometer](#)

Documents used during the research

1. Marketing Cheshire Destination Management Plan
2. Cheshire East Tourism Recovery Plan
3. Cheshire East Visitor Economy Session 29 June
4. Marketing Cheshire Members Insights
5. Visit England Domestic Sentiment Tracker
6. Visit England Covid 19 Consumer Sentiment Tracker April 2022
7. Meetings and Events State of the Nation
8. Clearsight Domestic and International Travel Recovery
9. Audience Agency Northwest Visitor Profiles
10. Staffordshire Draft Visitor Economy Action Plan
11. STR comparison data 2019 v 2022
12. Cheshire East 2015 Visitor Economy Strategy

Discussion Groups

Two discussion groups took place with a variety of Cheshire East Business & stakeholders. These discussions gave an opportunity for feedback & contributions from participants on the priorities set out in the current & draft new Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy. The latter of the two groups had an emphasis on views from the accommodation sector. Discussion centered around:

- Celebrating CE Strengths and Achievements
- Staycations
- Leisure versus Corporate
- Sustainability, Inclusivity and Positive Messaging
- Sharing Data and Insights
- Staff Retention, training & Skills
- Cost of Living
- National Connectivity
- Rural Connectivity & Accessibility

Public Consultation (Including Town & Parish Councils)

Priority 1: Position Cheshire East as a destination of choice for staycations – both day visits & staying visits The rationale Huge growth in domestic travel in 2021. Cheshire East is ideally positioned to take advantage of some of the key thematic trends post-Covid. Apart from an excellent geographical position with good connectivity providing access to new markets, the area is well positioned to exploit key themes such as: Outdoor experiences Friends & family Wellness Lifestyle & culture Sustainable & green In 2022 we are starting to see the return of outbound travel & we need to work hard to position Cheshire East for additional domestic trips. We need to understand & showcase our accommodation offer including self-catering, glamping, camping & caravanning offer as these are often perceived as value for money. We can tie that into walks & cycling along with itineraries around places to visit & places to eat & drink How important do you think priority 1 is for strengthening Cheshire East's visitor economy? Tick one box only

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very important		87.50%	7
2	Fairly important		0.00%	0
3	Not very important		12.50%	1
4	Not at all important		0.00%	0
5	Don't know / Not sure		0.00%	0
			answered	8
			skipped	0

Do you have any comments to make about priority 1? Please write in below

Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total

Do you have any comments to make about priority 1? Please write in below			
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	1
1	Cheshire East has a wealth of assets to build the visitor economy. The Council needs to work with partners to harness these and help them contribute to messaging		
		answered	1
		skipped	7

Priority 2: Enhance our data & analysis to enable better understanding of trends, & facilitate a more effective marketing strategy for the destination The rationale With the majority of visitor booking & searches on-line it is imperative destinations harness the power of data to target their limited resources. Technology & Big Data will allow Cheshire East to better understand our audience, visitors & preferences to deliver effective marketing whilst identifying gaps & opportunities. It also offers the opportunity to better understand how destination experience in Cheshire matches consumer expectations & trends. Cheshire East needs to work with local tourism & hospitality partners to capture relevant & timely audience & trend data for the benefit of targeted & cost-effective decision making. How important do you think priority 2 is for strengthening Cheshire East's visitor economy? Tick one box only

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very important		75.00%	6
2	Fairly important		12.50%	1
3	Not very important		12.50%	1
4	Not at all important		0.00%	0
5	Don't know / Not sure		0.00%	0
			answered	8
			skipped	0

Do you have any comments to make about priority 2? Please write in below

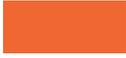
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
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Do you have any comments to make about priority 2? Please write in below			
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	2
1	Without clarity on visitor trends, offers cannot be shaped. It's vital to have good data.		
2	most people are already experienced in on-line searches.		
		answered	2
		skipped	6

Priority 3: Develop initiatives focused on sustainability & the green agenda to support business growth & extend options for consumers The rationale Consumer awareness of the impact of climate change is now much greater & is influencing decision making in respect to visits & overnight stays. Cheshire East businesses require support in their quest to become sustainable. As a destination we need to ensure consumers can access tourism facilities via sustainable travel where possible & have a clear understanding of the sustainability of Cheshire East as a visitor destination. How important do you think priority 3 is for strengthening Cheshire East's visitor economy? Tick one box only				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very important		50.00%	4
2	Fairly important		25.00%	2
3	Not very important		25.00%	2
4	Not at all important		0.00%	0
5	Don't know / Not sure		0.00%	0
			answered	8
			skipped	0

Do you have any comments to make about priority 3? Please write in below				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total

Do you have any comments to make about priority 3? Please write in below			
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	1
1	Not attainable until public transport is taken into the hands of the government of county council. private firms will not service unprofitable routes.		
		answered	1
		skipped	7

Priority 4: Work with local & national bodies to strengthen the appeal of tourism & hospitality jobs & careers in Cheshire East The rationale Cheshire East's Tourism & Hospitality businesses continue to struggle with recruitment. People do not see Hospitality as a career. Perceptions need to change & this will assist Cheshire East Businesses attract & retain talent allowing them to provide for visitors & locals alike. Cheshire East will work in partnership with Department of Work & Pensions & local Colleges to provide initial training programmes allowing progress into the sector. Added to this, a programme aimed at those in secondary school education will be launched to change perceptions of Hospitality as a career. How important do you think priority 4 is for strengthening Cheshire East's visitor economy? Tick one box only				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very important		50.00%	4
2	Fairly important		25.00%	2
3	Not very important		25.00%	2
4	Not at all important		0.00%	0
5	Don't know / Not sure		0.00%	0
			answered	8
			skipped	0

Do you have any comments to make about priority 4? Please write in below		
Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total

Do you have any comments to make about priority 4? Please write in below			
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	2
1	The opportunities in the heritage and museum sector can assist with this. The need to diversify the workforce is a key agenda at the moment		
2	A fair salary and reasonable hours of work are required first.		
		answered	2
		skipped	6

Priority 5: Proactively encourage business visits & events to Cheshire East, whether by using Cheshire & Warrington's sector strengths or working with towns & venues to attract an increase in innovative & unique events & festivals The rationale Cheshire & Warrington has significant strengths in green energy & life sciences & these sectors can form part of our positioning around Cheshire & Warrington as a place to host conferences & events. Cheshire East's rural venues, from Tatton Park to Cholmondeley Castle host a wide range of events throughout the year which drive visitors into the destination. We need to understand the potential for growth and what kind of events help make our place distinctive. Proactively work to attract events and promote current Cheshire East events widely. How important do you think priority 5 is for strengthening Cheshire East's visitor economy? Tick one box only				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very important		50.00%	4
2	Fairly important		25.00%	2
3	Not very important		12.50%	1
4	Not at all important		12.50%	1
5	Don't know / Not sure		0.00%	0
			answered	8
			skipped	0

Do you have any comments to make about priority 5? Please write in below

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	2
1	Focus on HS2 and connectivity of Crewe/south incl available spaces for overnight stays and conference facilities		
2	It is important all areas are considered. Smaller areas such as Sandbach and Nantwich, make a bigger offer when combined with Crewe and Macclesfield, yet these areas on their own may not draw a visitor economy.		
		answered	2
		skipped	6

Priority 6: Support for improved Rural Connectivity The rationale Many rural attractions rely on car arrivals & the lack of public transport will increasingly be seen as a barrier to growth. There are also issues around infrastructure investments including installing electric car charging points. Additionally broadband/WI-FI connectivity are still issues in rural areas. For Cheshire East we are seeing connectivity impacting staff recruitment & increasingly we are seeing the importance of rural connectivity & ease of tourism mobility as key for international visitors who wish not to drive once in the UK. The strategy will prioritise working with partners to raise the issues highlighted & encourage investment in rural infrastructure. How important do you think priority 6 is for strengthening Cheshire East's visitor economy? Tick one box only

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very important		87.50%
2	Fairly important		0.00%
3	Not very important		12.50%
4	Not at all important		0.00%
5	Don't know / Not sure		0.00%
		answered	8
		skipped	0

Do you have any comments to make about priority 6? Please write in below

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	3
1	Its a key component for access. Car is king, until there is a convenient reliable cheap alternative		
2	Fibre to premises costs have to be cut if there is to be a level playing field for Rural destinations. We are being crippled by slow internet		
3	The rural infrastructure definitely needs improvement, assisting visitors coming into airports and railway stations. Taxi ranks charge extortionate fees to transport visitors where there's little or no public transport		
		answered	3
		skipped	5

Priority 7: Accessible & Inclusive Tourism to Cheshire East The rationale Accessible & inclusive marketing needs to be at the heart of all communications. Inclusive marketing ensures all customers, regardless of any access requirements or specific characteristics, feel welcomed to a particular business. In this country 1 in 5 people are disabled (DWP). Impairments such as hearing loss, arthritis, epilepsy & autism are not visible & some customers won't disclose these on booking. The accessible tourism market in England is worth around £15 billion & demand for accessible accommodation & activities outstrips the current supply. Disabled travellers tend to be loyal as, with fewer businesses catering to their requirements, they often return to places that do. The strategy intends to place a greater focus on accessible & inclusive tourism & work with businesses to provide for & welcome this audience. Cheshire East will position itself as an inclusive & accessible destination. How important do you think priority 7 is for strengthening Cheshire East's visitor economy? Tick one box only

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total	
1	Very important		50.00%	4
2	Fairly important		37.50%	3
3	Not very important		12.50%	1
4	Not at all important		0.00%	0
5	Don't know / Not sure		0.00%	0
		answered	8	

Priority 7: Accessible & Inclusive Tourism to Cheshire East The rationale Accessible & inclusive marketing needs to be at the heart of all communications. Inclusive marketing ensures all customers, regardless of any access requirements or specific characteristics, feel welcomed to a particular business. In this country 1 in 5 people are disabled (DWP). Impairments such as hearing loss, arthritis, epilepsy & autism are not visible & some customers won't disclose these on booking. The accessible tourism market in England is worth around £15 billion & demand for accessible accommodation & activities outstrips the current supply. Disabled travellers tend to be loyal as, with fewer businesses catering to their requirements, they often return to places that do. The strategy intends to place a greater focus on accessible & inclusive tourism & work with businesses to provide for & welcome this audience. Cheshire East will position itself as an inclusive & accessible destination. How important do you think priority 7 is for strengthening Cheshire East's visitor economy? Tick one box only

skipped

0

Do you have any comments to make about priority 7? Please write in below

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	3
1	Accessibility for people with additional needs benefits everyone.		
2	Priority 6 must be in first		
3	I feel strongly about assisting disabled traveler's.		
		answered	3
		skipped	5

Priority 8: Use Cheshire East's strategic sites & unique stories to encourage domestic & International Travel Trade Visits The rationale Cheshire East has nationally & internationally recognised attractions & some special stories to tell. Jodrell Bank has recently been designated a World Heritage Site & there is an ambition to capitalised on its International appeal & the links to the rest of the Cheshire East Visitor Economy. The UK currently has 33 World Heritage Sites, with more in the offering. It is intended to utilise the interest in World Heritage Tours to raise the profile of Cheshire East as a visitor destination & profile Jodrell Bank at the heart of this. Tatton Park is one of the most visited attractions in the England, helping to showcase the historic houses, gardens & unique event venues of the area. The variety & quality of our historic estates & their appeal to a wide range of audiences provide another strong & complementary heritage offer that help position the Cheshire East offer to key audiences. Unique stories, including the silk or music heritage of Macclesfield, a secret nuclear bunker, gin-making on the fringes of the Peak District or film & literary connections, can help to generate interest & character that can be targeted for specific audiences or at particular time, adding value & colour to the wider offer. How important do you think priority 8 is for strengthening Cheshire East's visitor economy? Tick one box only

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very important		75.00%	6
2	Fairly important		12.50%	1
3	Not very important		12.50%	1
4	Not at all important		0.00%	0
5	Don't know / Not sure		0.00%	0
			answered	8
			skipped	0

Do you have any comments to make about priority 8? Please write in below

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	4
1	The need for a coherent narrative about Cheshire's offer is key to being successful within this strategy			
2	the best of Cheshire East and its potential are key. The examples given will attract an audience of middle aged middle class visitors. This is key group with disposable income but something for younger people too.			

Do you have any comments to make about priority 8? Please write in below			
3	Any marketing Cheshire East can provide to help generate interest is good		
4	I think there's an huge opportunity to link smaller creative businesses with the major leaders in our county. In turn smaller visitor attractions will promote our halls, parks and major places of interest		
		answered	4
		skipped	4

Final questions Are there any other priorities that you think should be included in the strategy? Please write in below			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	6
1	Facilitate event organisers to make putting on events more straight forward		
2	Opportunities for accommodation providers to experience and network with tourism providers. This will help visibility of the area		
3	Put on events, be ambitious. More Festivals.		
4	Urgent attention needs to be given to providing affordable fibre connections to rural businesses and cultural destinations		
5	Improving promotion for all visitor attractions across the county, more social media promotion and also collaborative incentives		
6	No the planned focus is right		
		answered	6
		skipped	2

Is there anything that worked well in the previous strategy that you want to see retained? Please write in below			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	4

Is there anything that worked well in the previous strategy that you want to see retained? Please write in below

1	not really		
2	I'm not aware of the previous strategy		
3	A video was made promoting Macclesfield with all sorts of activities and fun activities included. More of this needed that can be searched on line		
4	teams meetings and networking opportunities - sharing of experience between partners is of value.		
		answered	4
		skipped	4

What key strengths should be front & centre for Cheshire East's Visitor Economy Strategy? Please write in below

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	5
1	Commercial and business visits		
2	The uniqueness of Cheshire's offer: High quality programming in both rural and urban settings. There is something for everyone so segment targeted marketing is important. There is also a need to join up agencies so all are using the same unique narratives.		
3	the rural beauty, its accessibility by road, rail and air. close to Manchester and Liverpool		
4	A map of Cheshire attractions for visitors could be useful. More presence on television		
5	Focus on what makes CEC special and attractive to audiences identified and then communicate this in a cost-effective way to those same audiences.		
		answered	5
		skipped	3

What is there about Cheshire East that helps sell it locally, nationally & internationally? Please write in below

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	5
1	Connectivity. HS2		
2	It's easy to get to from anywhere via Crewe & the M6 plus Manchester Airport. It's a mix of offers from independent retail to rural escape to industrial heritage		
3	better to focus on domestic tourism, developing active holiday ideas. Fun things. walking trails, cycling trails, festivals, markets, cafes culture, a good central venue for concerts, comedians, arts, decent cinemas, we have to leave Cheshire East to access many of these things. Be ambitious with public transport. Ask yourself when you were last on a bus and why? Widen roads and get cycling lanes in. Make it easier to do these things.		
4	There are some fantastic historic and cultural destinations which are accessible and unique		
5	Countryside, halls, markets, places of interest and rural crafts		
		answered	5
		skipped	3

What are the perceived limitations & barriers for success – ideas on how the strategy can overcome these? Please write in below

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	4
1	Spell "centre" correctly. Not enough in Cheshire to have a thriving tourism economy. lots in Cheshire to promote for business travel and activity which will deliver local spend and investment		
2	The regeneration in some of the town centres is ongoing and may not quite be ready to compete with some of the rural offerings. It's a difficult messaging.		
3	its a conservative county, a perception that most people with influence are okay, so this makes change difficult to achieve.		
4	LACK OF RELIABLE INTERNET CONSTANT POWER CUTS AND SURGES IS costing Rural destinations in time and preventing people coming back to work in the office and making people nervous about staying in our accommodation without reliable internet		
		answered	4

What are the perceived limitations & barriers for success – ideas on how the strategy can overcome these? Please write in below

skipped

4

About you Which of the following best describes how you are you responding to this survey: Please select one box only

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	On behalf of a group, organisation or club		25.00%	2
2	On behalf of a local business		25.00%	2
3	As an individual (e.g. local resident)		25.00%	2
4	As an elected Cheshire East Ward Councillor, or Town/Parish Councillor		0.00%	0
5	As a council employee / A professional		25.00%	2
6	Other (please specify):		0.00%	0
			answered	8
			skipped	0
Other (please specify): (0)				
No answers found.				

If you are responding on behalf of a group, organisation, club, Ward or Parish / Town Council area please state the name and postcode in the box below (you do not need to complete the rest of the 'About you' section). Please write in below

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Name of group, organisation, club, Ward or Parish / Town Council:		100.00%	1
	1	Clonter Opera Theatre		
2	Postcode:		100.00%	1

If you are responding on behalf of a group, organisation, club, Ward or Parish / Town Council area please state the name and postcode in the box below (you do not need to complete the rest of the 'About you' section). Please write in below

1 CW12 2LT

answered	1
skipped	7

What is your gender identity? Please select one option only

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male	42.86%	3
2	Female	57.14%	4
3	Prefer not to say	0.00%	0
4	Prefer to self describe (please write in the box below):	0.00%	0
		answered	7
		skipped	1
Prefer to self describe (please write in the box below): (0)			
No answers found.			

What age group do you belong to? Please select one option only

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	16-24	0.00%	0
2	25-34	0.00%	0
3	35-44	14.29%	1
4	45-54	28.57%	2

What age group do you belong to? Please select one option only				
5	55-64		57.14%	4
6	65-74		0.00%	0
7	75-84		0.00%	0
8	85 and over		0.00%	0
9	Prefer not to say		0.00%	0
			answered	7
			skipped	1

What is your ethnic origin? Please write in below				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish		100.00%	7
2	Any other White background		0.00%	0
3	Mixed: White and Black Caribbean / African / Asian		0.00%	0
4	Asian / Asian British		0.00%	0
5	Black African / Caribbean / Black British		0.00%	0
6	Prefer not to say		0.00%	0
7	Prefer to self describe (please write in the box below):		0.00%	0
			answered	7
			skipped	1
Prefer to self describe (please write in the box below): (0)				

What is your ethnic origin? Please write in below

No answers found.

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? This includes problems related to old age. Please select one option only

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		14.29%	1
2	No		85.71%	6
3	Prefer not to say		0.00%	0
			answered	7
			skipped	1

Appendix 2

[The Green Accreditation Webinar \(thecaterersummits.com\)](https://thecaterersummits.com)

Visit Britain - [‘Making your business sustainable’](#)

Visit Britain - [market and communicate your green credentials.](#)

[Green Tourism](#) - Award-winning certification programme.

[Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency](#)

[Tourism Consultants Network event March 29th 2022 – Responding to sustainability - The Tourism Society](#)

Relevant Strategies

Cheshire East Rural Action Plan -

<https://modern.gov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s97674/Rural%20Action%20Plan%202022.pdf>