

*Cheshire East*

# ***Visitor Economy Strategy***

**2016 - 2020**

*Increasing performance,  
prosperity and wellbeing*



# Forward from Councillor Rachel Bailey, Leader Cheshire East Council



• Councillor Rachel Bailey

Cheshire East is already well loved by visitors, and justifiably so. We are very fortunate in the variety of our offer, including our countryside, heritage and culture, award-winning visitor attractions, premier events, wedding and business venues, quality accommodation and our hospitality. We are also well placed and well connected, with two international airports close by, easy access to nearby cities and major rail and road links.

The visitor economy contributes greatly to our prosperity and supports a wider vision for the economy, employment and quality of life of Cheshire East. Tourism can be a significant force for good, not only in economic terms but also as an essential contributor to the excellent quality of life and place that Cheshire East offers.

A visitor economy strategy for Cheshire East was first adopted in February 2011 to cover a five year period. This has now been updated for the period 2016-20, providing an approach to maintaining growth. It sets out the Council's aspirations to continue to enhance and grow our visitor economy for the benefit of the current residents of Cheshire East, its future residents and of course its visitors. Partnership working continues to be at the core of delivery, while developing quality experiences are at the centre of the offer. I encourage all involved to work together to make the most of the opportunities that the visitor economy can offer us all.

# Introduction

The visitor economy is the UK's sixth largest industry and in the current climate of economic uncertainty it is one of the few sectors seeing substantial growth, contributing around £115 billion to the UK economy and responsible for one third of all new jobs created between 2009 and 2011. The sector directly employs over 1.3 million people with many of these jobs being entry level or part time. 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.

As a Local authority, Cheshire East has a key role in developing the visitor economy's local growth potential through playing a strong leadership role and catalyst for growth; creating the conditions for it to thrive, setting the planning context, investing in infrastructure, improving skills and incentivising inward investment.

Cheshire East can also ensure there is a rich cultural offer to attract visitors, pulling in 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.

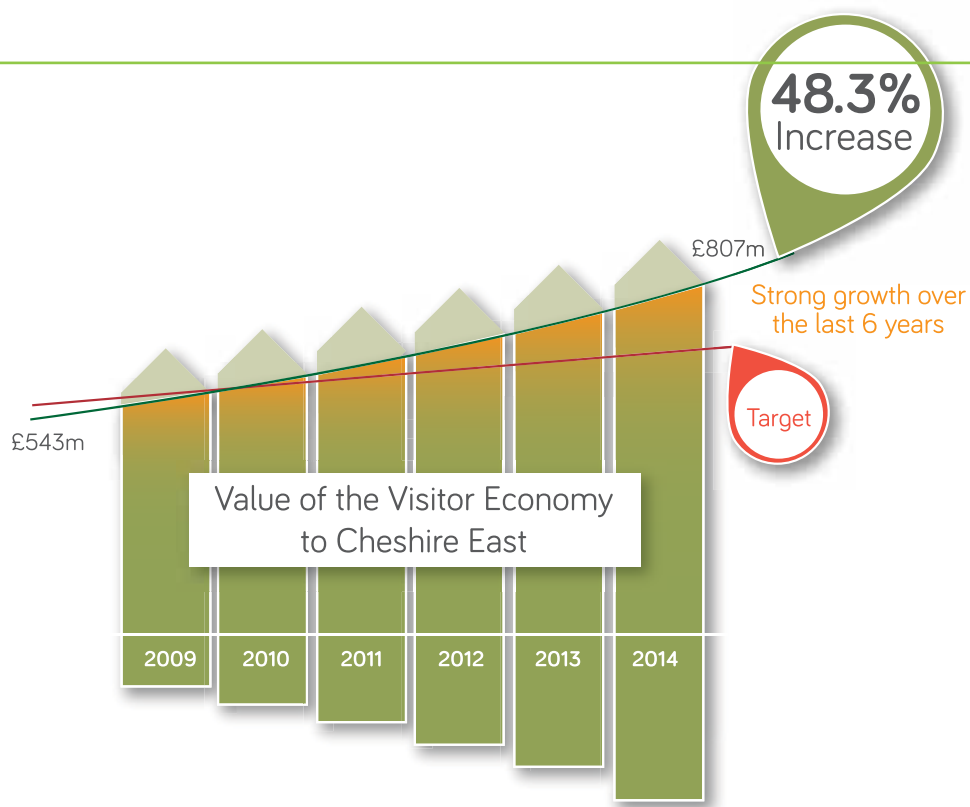




Cheshire East Council is playing a key leadership role in capitalising on our local visitor economy's growth potential through creating the conditions for it to thrive and ensuring a rich cultural offer to attract visitors. However there are opportunities to further drive this growth through increasing productivity. This means getting visitors to spend more when they visit and through turning day visits into overnight stays.

Key ways Cheshire East is achieving this is through giving visitors a higher value offer both in traditional tourism services but also investing in the wider destination, helping to develop the brand and place image to strengthen the pull of an area, improving access to suitable transport and working in partnership to improve the conditions for the visitor economy to grow.

The first visitor economy strategy for Cheshire East was launched in 2011. Since then the borough has seen growth year on year with the most recent figures showing Cheshire East's performance to be some of the best nationally. The value of the visitor economy to Cheshire East is now worth £807m, welcoming almost 15m visitors and employing 10,851 fte's in 2015; an increase of 26% since 2009.



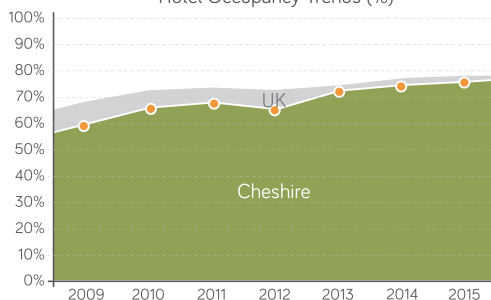


Hotel occupancy is a very good indicator of money directly going in to the visitor economy, and this has also been achieving strong growth of over 10% since 2012 against a UK average of 3.1% for the same period. In addition to this money earned from each hotel room has also increased significantly up from £51.68 in 2012 to £58.94 in 2014. Hotel occupancy figures for Cheshire East including a detailed analysis of the accommodation sector are shown below.

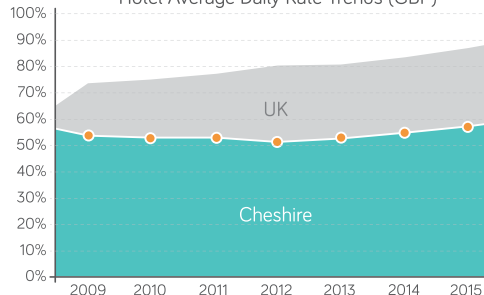


Cheshire East Hotel Occupancy Strongly Growing

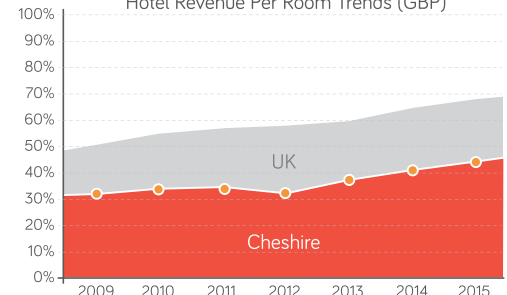
Hotel Occupancy Trends (%)



Hotel Average Daily Rate Trends (GBP)



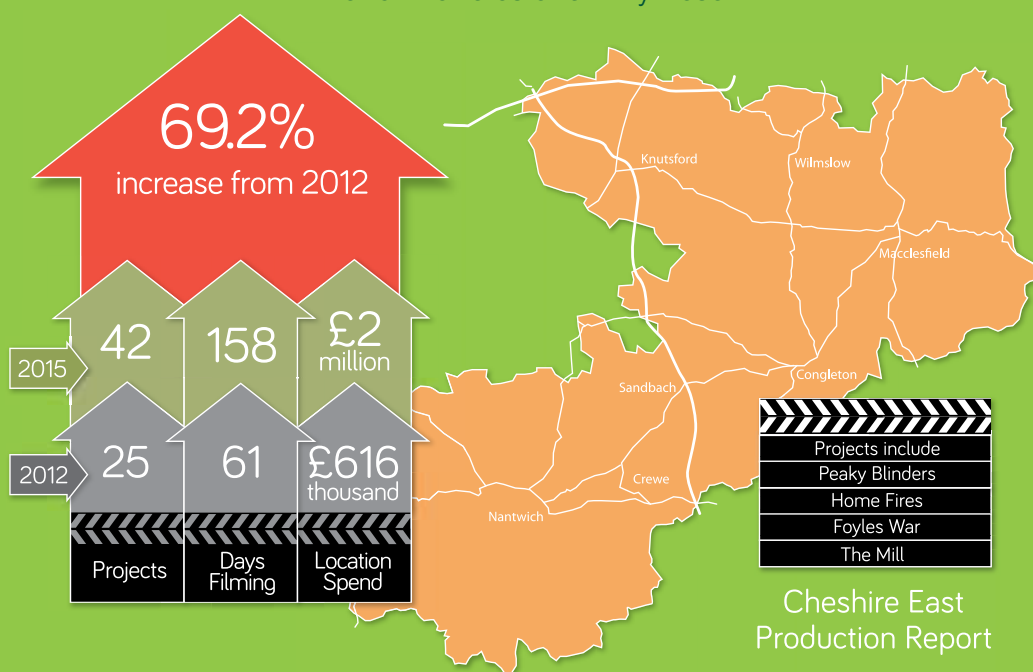
Hotel Revenue Per Room Trends (GBP)



# Key reasons for the success of the visitor economy sector in Cheshire East are:



- A high quality product that offers something for everyone from strenuous activity to canal boating and gentle walks, from luxury hotels to quality B&B, from fine dining to brewery trails and small cultural festivals and artisan markets
- The continuation and expansion of established events that drive visits e.g. RHS at Tatton Park, Rewind, and Cholmondeley Power & Speed.
- Proximity to an expanding international airport and other growing visitor economies driven by a variety of factors e.g. football and business in Manchester, tourism in Liverpool, the Tour de France in Yorkshire – all encouraging longer stays in the North
- Increases in filming stimulating a desire to visit e.g. Home Fires in Bunbury, Peaky Blinders; Cold Feet and The Tales of Jimmy Rose
- Continued investment from premium hotels and marinas to create bigger and more prestigious product
- A strong weddings sector
- An increase in international visitors after some years of stagnation
- The growth of Manchester especially to the south and around the airport





# Setting the Context

In considering the context there are a number of strategic themes that are guiding the future strategy.





## Quality of Place

Research confirms Cheshire & Warrington as a strong performing region with a highly skilled and economically active population, helping it to be one of the most productive regions in the country. Research also suggests that 'Quality of Place' is a key consideration for individuals in choosing not only where to visit, but also where to live, work and invest. Cheshire East boasts a very high quality of place offering that it needs to not only maintain, but enhance.

This has a direct bearing on our consideration of the visitor economy, particularly in the contribution of the rural environment, culture/heritage, visitor attractions & events. It is also a significant consideration in planning or designing for opportunities in places like Crewe or Macclesfield or retaining the significant elements of the

character of landscapes, villages and market towns. If both visitors and entrepreneurs are attracted to the same sort of places we must embed this in future strategic and economic planning. Vibrant places that are culturally and physically interesting attract people, whether to visit, live, work or invest. If correct, then the focus on quality of place will not only benefit the visitor economy, but also help to attract a new generation of 'young wealth creators' to the region. There is a need to retain the characteristics that support existing success and build on those that help attract future prosperity.







## Infrastructure

Cheshire East is already well placed and well connected, with two international airports close by, easy access to nearby cities and major rail and road links. Facilitating and enhancing connectivity will continue to be a vital contributor to the ongoing success of the visitor economy. There are significant opportunities for further improvement in the future with the potential of HS2, motorway improvements and growth in international air routes. The continuing roll-out of broadband and potential to focus on 'harder to reach' areas will also be of significant benefit, particularly in rural areas. In supporting such major infrastructure, there is a continuing need to build partnerships and relationships that will exploit the full potential of this connectivity as well as focusing on improvements such as signage, 'coach friendly' status and public transport information.

## Dwell Time

Cheshire East Council and its partners are working to encourage day visitors to stay longer and see more of the area and overnight visitors to stay for longer or to visit again. This is being achieved by identifying itineraries that can offer the visitor similar places to visit and through providing up-to-date information on what to do, see and where to eat. This is brought together within **[www.discovercheshire.co.uk](http://www.discovercheshire.co.uk)** and builds on the awareness raising tools of visitor information at key gateways, visitor information centres and national or regional public relations.

Work is needed to encourage more Cheshire East businesses and towns to cross promote each other's' visitor facilities and events both pre and post arrival. There is also the prospect to utilise new social media opportunities that ensure the visitor to Cheshire East is sent the information they require once in the area; encouraging them to stay longer. An opportunity also exists with the wedding industry to ensure guests are given information about the area and what's on around the time of the wedding with the purpose of visitors booking early or staying longer. As over 70% of the weddings in Cheshire East are from couples outside of the area this is one area that could see significant immediate benefit.

# Skills

The hospitality and tourism sector continues to be a large employer that is experiencing significant growth. It currently employs a workforce of 2.4m, a rise of 493,000 since 2009. However, its productivity is undermining its economic performance and overall profitability. The skills base of the sector plays a critical and important role in undermining productivity given the number of businesses reporting that their staff lacks sufficient skills to meet business needs. In large part this is caused by high levels of labour turnover as 870,000 of the 993,000 staff the sector needs by 2022 are to replace existing staff. Labour turnover also diverts existing investment in training and development away from where it is needed most in addressing critical skill gaps.



Considerable attention has been given to the recruitment challenges in the sector, but evidence suggests that paying more attention to staff retention would help to tackle recruitment problems, while also increasing the competency of the hospitality and tourism workforce. The visitor economy also plays an important role, especially for young people, in providing 'pathways to work', equipping people with core skills in a vibrant and customer focused sector.

Cheshire East Council is attempting to address such issues through setting up of an arms length Skills & Growth company to tackle long-term unemployment, increase productivity of businesses and grow the

Cheshire East economy. The new company will help to ensure there is a highly effective labour market and thriving economy to make Cheshire East the best place to live and work in the country. Focus will be placed on creating employment opportunities for all including providing opportunities for young people to access apprenticeships, training and jobs; supporting people into employment; developing skills, reskilling and upskilling; matching current and future labour market needs. It will also work to attract and grow business, creating high quality employment; attracting investment; creating and safeguarding jobs; improving business productivity and supporting businesses to prosper.



## Investment

There is already significant investment in hand during the next period, especially in heritage attractions and hotel expansion. Quarry Bank will benefit from a significant HLF grant to develop the offer and increase visitor numbers. Tatton Park is continuing investment, including a successful HLF grant for the farm and investment in retail, catering, events and conservation. Jodrell Bank 's 'First Light' project has already successfully achieved a stage 1 HLF grant and could eventually lead to an investment of up to £19m in the site. In addition, leisure and heritage developments in Macclesfield and additional capacity in quality hotels across the borough paint a positive picture for investment in the sector. However, there are significant opportunities related to the potential of the 'Northern

Gateway', conferencing and business tourism, new hotel capacity (e.g. Macclesfield Town Centre or areas serving Crewe), and the need for continuing investment in public realm, quality of environment, the cultural destination and heritage assets. There is a continuing requirement therefore to ensure that the visitor economy benefits from a focus on Inward Investment and other funding opportunities.





# Key Consumer trends



With the advent of the recession came the “staycation” but the upturn in the economy has seen a return to foreign holidays, although the impact of the staycation has in many areas meant hoteliers and attractions improving and investing in their products with consumers once again fallen in love with what England has to offer. Moreover there is a trend amongst consumers from “things to see” towards “things to do” or “things to learn”.

Although consumers are still prioritising leisure spend and have more leisure time than before, trying to do more creates the perception of time pressure. They are increasingly looking for bespoke activities in their leisure time and we need to ensure these experiences are identified and ‘bookable’.

Demographic changes are also likely to affect consumer choices. Having focussed on an ageing population and the spending power of the empty nester, England has experienced an upturn in the birth-rate and therefore an increase in babies, toddlers and primary school children. The way people choose and book travel and leisure experiences had radically changed with mobile and online payments now dominating. We have an enormous cohort of people who are digital natives, capable of finding information and transacting rapidly on any device. However this does not take away the need for effective post arrival information to stimulate incremental visits and purchases. The leaflet may be slowly fading in importance but is not yet dead, the permanent way finder is still important especially in Cheshire where mobile phone and Wi-Fi signals are still not strong everywhere.



# Key Consumer trends



^ Forest Chapel by Dotty44

←

In terms of other trends relevant to Cheshire East is the growing practice of turning VFR (visiting friends or relatives) trips into leisure ones. Consumers wishing to maximise their leisure time have sought to capitalise on family occasions and turn these trips into leisure orientated ones; particularly pertinent due to the high number of Weddings taking place in Cheshire East.

Different types of domestic leisure tourism can also benefit from wider trends. Health tourism (such as spa breaks), for example, will not only be driven by a generation of health conscious older people but also by rising perceptions of time pressure and blurring distinctions between work and leisure – heightening consumer desire for treats and breaks. Similar trends in health consciousness and a desire for new experiences will also lead to the growth of active tourism. The next generation of retired consumers are ‘younger’ and more active than before – making them a viable market for this type of holiday.

In terms of destination types, increasing urbanisation in our day-to-day lives has helped the appeal of the countryside grow as a destination for ‘getting away’. On the other hand, younger people with less knowledge or experience of rural areas may not understand the opportunities that the countryside offers and may fail to be attracted to rural locations. One future implication of this trend is for people to combine destination types on one trip; rural breaks can easily include a day trip into the nearest city. In developing this type of behaviour, it is essential that destinations work together to communicate the overall tourism attraction of that area, rather than simply compete with one another for footfall.

*Source: VisitEngland’s ‘Domestic Leisure Tourism Trends for the Next Decade’*

# Strategic Context

The strategic direction of the visitor economy in Cheshire East refers to the following documents:



## **Cheshire East Council 3 Year Plan**

- **OUTCOME 1** Our local communities are strong and supportive
- **OUTCOME 2** Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy
- **OUTCOME 3** People have the life skills and education they need to thrive
- **OUTCOME 4** Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place
- **OUTCOME 5** People live well and for longer
- **OUTCOME 6** Cheshire East is a good place to live and work

## **Britain Tourism Strategy. Delivering a Golden Legacy: a growth strategy for inbound tourism 2012 - 2020 (VisitBritain)**

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport launched VisitBritain's long term tourism growth strategy for Britain. This ambitious strategy - delivering a Golden legacy: a growth strategy for inbound tourism 2012 - 2020 - aims to attract 40 million international visitors a year, spending £31.3 billion, by 2020. There are four main parts to the strategy:

- Enhance Britain's image
- Ensure that Britain is packaged and sold
- Broaden Britain's strong product offering
- Make visiting Britain easier (air routes and visas)

## **England: A Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010 - 2020 (VisitEngland)**

The ten year strategic framework for Tourism in England, published in March 2010, aims to maximise tourism's contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life in England. It sets out the ways in which the industry can work together to realise the framework's growth ambition of 5% year on year in the value of tourism, creating an additional 225,000 jobs and £50 billion of expenditure by 2020

- Marketing Cheshire Destination Management Plan
- Strategic Economic Plan and Growth Plan for Cheshire and Warrington
- Macclesfield Town Centre Vision
- Prospects for Crewe
- Cheshire East Rights of Way implementation plan
- Local sustainable Transport Strategy
- Where Rural Matters Strategy,
- Macclesfield Heritage and Culture Strategy,
- Cheshire East Local Plan,
- Strategic Asset Management Plan,
- Sustainable Communities Strategy
- All Change for Crewe,
- High Growth City,
- Public Realm Congleton ,
- Science Framework
- Engine Of the North Growth Vision





**Macclesfield has seen a cultural renaissance since 2010 when the Barnaby Festival burst onto the town's cobbles. Cheshire could better capitalise on the rich mix of events and attractions across the area. Now biennial, Barnaby wants to explore events in the 'off' year - outside the festival itself. Quality, appropriate and affordable marketing will be essential to enable and support those events. Barnaby Festival, Treacle Market and other quirky cultural events could be pulled together and intelligently promoted as a distinct and attractive offer to both bring visitors in and get residents exploring their own back yard.**



**Lynne Jones, Chair of Trustees, Macclesfield Barnaby Festival**

## The ambition

### Prosperity, Wellbeing and Performance

Our ambition is focussed around maximising growth of the visitor economy whilst ensuring greater prosperity across the widest number of communities and encouraging participation that will lead to greater wellbeing for both residents and visitors. Tourism can be seen as a force for good both in economic terms but also as an essential contributor to the excellent quality of life and place Cheshire East offers.

The prospects for future growth.

1. Recent funding initiatives such as The Northern Tourism Growth Fund via Visit England was designed to redress the imbalance in tourism from the South to the North. This has allowed Cheshire East to put its hero products in initiatives to target potential tourist and tourism professionals in a number of markets:

- Trade buyers in China
  - UK based Inbound tour operators to stimulate more inclusion in group itineraries
  - Better briefing of Visit Britain staff to encourage them to go beyond the obvious
  - Journalists in US, Germany, China and Australia
2. The continued expansion of Manchester Airport and the announcement of potentially up to 6 new flights a week from China. Independent international tourism is also likely to grow with implications for the welcome that our industry will need to deliver especially in terms of information, food and beverages and language proficiency. Cheshire visitor attractions are working together as a network on key overseas marketing initiatives

to increase the profile of the destination and its priority products to target overseas audiences.

3. The increasing certainty that Crewe will play a key role in HS2 and the potential for two nearby HS2 stations Crewe and Manchester Airport
4. New investments by partners: new visitor centre at Jodrell Bank, new hotel projects, Quarry Bank & the Styal Estate and Tatton Park





^ [paulkyte.co.uk](http://paulkyte.co.uk)

## The ambition

### Prosperity, Wellbeing and Performance

5. New nationally significant events actively encouraged to Cheshire East that will make a significant contribution to profile, image and brand awareness  
Working to grow local events into strategic events where the potential exists. Marketing Cheshire has identified major events as a key economic driver for Cheshire Overall with the 6 major events in Cheshire attracting over half a million visitors, generating nearly £48m of visitor expenditure and supporting around 730 jobs. (Marketing Cheshire/ Amion Consulting 2011)
6. A clear focus on encouraging Business Tourism through the targeting of key sectors in Cheshire along with a framework to improve facilities and infrastructure.

There are four areas that need to be addressed to stimulate growth including capacity and availability of venues; national market awareness; a clear focus on priority segments and customer expectations and best practice to limit the leakage of enquiries.

7. A focus on regeneration initiatives in Macclesfield will see its heritage, culture and leisure facilities complement its retail offer to increase the appeal for visitors, residents and businesses. It will continue to be a culturally vibrant town providing a quality public realm that reflects the 'story' of Macclesfield. The story of Macclesfield is one of creativity, entrepreneurship and silk. This silk heritage will be a particular focus for

a vision of a 'silk quarter' centred around the Silk Museum that reflects and celebrates this historic and international connection.

8. A focus on regeneration initiatives in Crewe will greatly enhance the town centre as a destination for visitors including those enjoying cultural activities around Crewe Lyceum. Also with the opening up of Basford as a major employment hub and the probable HS2 Station project there will be a strong focus on developing Crewe's Business Tourism potential. • Recognising the changing tastes of consumers is vital to ensure provision is ahead of demand.



**The Canal & River Trust's vision and 10 year Strategy 'Living Waterways Transform places and enrich lives' fully supports the priority to develop a distinctive Rural Tourism Offer. Our Strategy is to create special places which can be enjoyed by millions in a variety of ways to enrich their lives. Our priority is to develop good strategic partnerships and be recognised as a valued partner that gets things done and develop our canals and rivers for the benefit of both local communities and visitors. By working with Cheshire East we can develop our canals as key destinations offering a wide range of activities to attract visitors ranging from unique wildlife habitats through to industrial and social heritage attractions of the local area. By developing a co-ordinated marketing offer throughout the local area which incorporates a wide range of offers, we can create a unique and distinctive visitor offer.**

**Wendy Capelle, Waterways Manager, Canal & River Trust**



## The ambition

### Prosperity, Wellbeing and Performance

9. More funding for rural tourism via LEADER and RDPE, potentially leading to a genuinely co-ordinated rural tourism strategy across Cheshire.
  10. Developing Alderley Park into a 'world-class, centre of excellence for life sciences', as well as providing a 100 bedroom hotel that will benefit the sites conference centre. This will in-turn will improve the areas potential for Business Tourism.
  11. An increasing recognition among businesses and the public sector that the location and connectivity of Cheshire East offers up many opportunities for the creation of tourism opportunities
  12. The continued development and recognition of Media City at Salford leading to increased film and TV production taking place in Cheshire East.
  13. Positioning Cheshire East as a Cultural Destination through and a prominent part of the local visitor offer, helping to drive the growth of the visitor economy.
  14. An arms length Skills & Growth company through Cheshire East Council to tackle long-term unemployment, increase productivity of businesses and grow the Cheshire East economy.
- However in the period since the previous strategy was developed there have been significant changes in the funds available to all areas of local government. The implications for any new visitor economy strategy are:
- Resources have to be targeted to those projects which are likely to deliver the best returns
  - The focus need to be on doing fewer things better. The competitive nature of tourism means that lots of small sums are unlikely to produce transformational results
  - The engagement of the private sector e.g. the hospitality industry is vital and their input needs to be sought
  - A clear understanding of where funding support is available should inform some of the decisions.
  - Recognising the changing tastes of consumers is vital to ensure provision is ahead of demand.





With the current talk around the Northern Powerhouse and in particular the focus on Crewe as a high growth city, business tourism is going to be more important than ever.

The excellent transport links as well as the drive to expand Crewe as a business destination will be key to the success of the visitor economy strategy of east Cheshire.

Improving the business tourism opportunity is at the forefront of key stakeholders within Crewe. With this in mind a group of these stakeholders have come together and created the Destination Crewe forum in order to identify opportunities to increase business tourism within the Crewe area.

Mart Louwerse, Chair Cheshire East Hoteliers and General Manager Crewe Hall Hotel

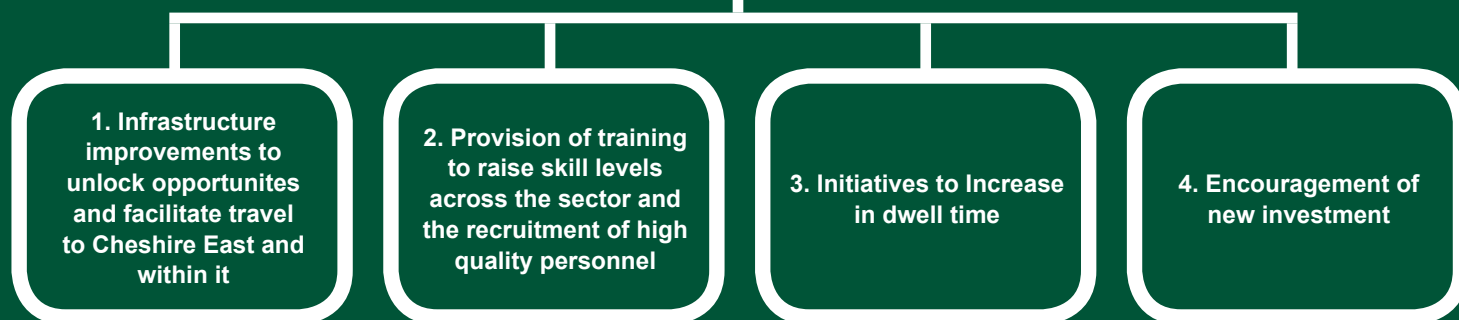


# Economic drivers

A high degree of interdependency exists between that visitor economy and the Cheshire East Economy as a whole. There are four economic drivers that underpin this strategy and which are critical to its success:



## Performance, Prosperity and Wellbeing



1. Infrastructure improvements to unlock opportunities and facilitate travel to Cheshire East and within it

The opportunities are:

- To rectify speedily the disparity between travel to Cheshire by rail which is fast and efficient and travel within Cheshire by rail which is slow and infrequent
- To alleviate reliance on the M6
- To provide a class-leading welcome for coaches

**Key stakeholders:** CEC, MC, Train companies and other transport companies, the Coach Tourism Council

2. Provision of training to raise skill levels across the sector and the recruitment of high quality personnel

The opportunities are:

- To promote the sector is a worthwhile career pathway and to provide appropriate local training and training providers to ensure excellent skill levels and recognised qualifications

- To give support to employers to encourage them to train and to recruit staff

- To think more imaginatively about how to support housing and transport in rural tourism clusters

**Key stakeholders:** CEC, MC, the LEP, hoteliers and attractions, training providers and colleges



# Economic drivers

Macclesfield Canal, Astbury by wipper >



^ Middlewich Folk & Boat by June Cooper



^ The Duck Race on Joey the Swan in Wistaston by saycheese1234

## 3. Initiatives to Increase in dwell time

The opportunities here are:

- To encourage complementary tourism businesses to collaborate to create longer and richer itineraries and encourage short breaks
- The provision of inspiring tourism information that links up tourism propositions itineraries focused on attracting specific market segments
- To encourage longer stays in the area on the back of events – both public and private such as weddings and to look at remarketing opportunities to event attendees
- The development of our most attractive market towns into overnight stay propositions e.g. Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich and more viable business tourism locations e.g. Crewe and the airport catchment

**Key stakeholders:** Visit Britain/ England, MC, Attractions and consortia of attractions, town councils and funding bodies such as ACE

## 4. Encouragement of new investment

The opportunities are:

- To encourage and support the building of appropriate accommodations where there is a demonstrable need in or near tourism clusters: hotels, upscale self-catering and camping and farm stays
- To encourage sustainable new attractions where there is a clear business case especially in the outdoor exercise/adrenalin, food and drink, family and business tourism/ conference segments
- To promote available funding more forcefully
- Investment that supports or enhances quality of place

**Key stakeholders:** CEC, MC, funding bodies such as HLF and the LEP



# Strategic Priorities

The strategic themes help to identify the priorities in seeking to maximise the contribution of the visitor economy. This links to other Cheshire East economic agendas including skills & training, regeneration, inward investment, strategic events, business tourism, rural economy, quality of place, brand and profile. The priorities between them encompass the most promising and forward-looking opportunities for growth in Cheshire East. The 'Communities of interest' these priorities create will guide related action plans, partnerships and project development over the period.



“The essence of strategy is sacrifice” said Napoleon and with funding and resource limited, it is vital that we concentrate effort into areas that will deliver the best return and organise the sector as efficiently as possible with a view to engendering widespread cooperation. Moreover the highly competitive nature of tourism, the increasingly discerning nature of visitors and the need to allocate resource effectively means that we should apply a high quality threshold to what we are promoting and lead with our most distinctive offer.

# Performance targets



Over the period of the previous strategy the economic value of the visitor economy in Cheshire East increased by 24.7% over the course of the previous strategy. Visit England in their 'A Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010-2020' report identifies an ambition to grow the value of the visitor economy in value, year on year, until 2020. Therefore Cheshire East will ally itself with the national target and look to grow the value of the visitor economy by 5% during the period of this framework. These targets are shown below.

| YEAR | VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY IN CHESHIRE EAST |
|------|---|
| 2016 | £876m   |
| 2017 | £922m   |
| 2018 | £971m   |
| 2019 | £1.022bn                                      |
| 2020 | £1.076bn                                      |

Employment in the sector has been growing at a rate of 7% per year on average so projected increase from 10,851 to 14,648.

Visitor numbers have grown by an average of 7% a year therefore our projected increase would be from 14.6million to 19.7million. The growth of Manchester is likely to inflate this target significantly as for many people in the South of the city Cheshire East with its open spaces and National Trust offer is seen as a green lung.

Overnight visitors are up to three times more valuable than day visitors and although some hotels are reporting record occupancy levels and a flattening out of seasonality, we believe that there is still some capacity to be filled. Future occupancy could be driven not just by promoting the leisure tourism offer but also by airport expansion and the advent of HS2.

# Moving forward & getting organised

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As with the previous strategy, the creation of a Visitor Economy Forum is advocated to ensure coordination and prioritisation. It should represent the key stakeholders and include a representatives from adjoining areas to ensure harmonisation where there are cross-boundary opportunities and in meeting the needs of visitors.

The forum will be based around the strategic priorities which between them encompass the most promising and forward-looking opportunities for growth in Cheshire East. The provisions of funding via bodies such as Visit England are being more aligned to reward thematic projects. We would therefore encourage individual geographic brands to engage with these themes to encourage co-operation and greater synergies across Cheshire East and to be more aligned to the needs of the customer.

| Strategic priority                                  | Themes   | Locations   | Lead partners   | Other partners  | Actions   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| <b>To Promote Cheshire East's Key Attractors</b>    | Communities<br>Hotels<br>Self Catering<br>Spa's<br>Market Towns<br>Events<br>Weddings  |   | Town/Parish Councils<br>Tourism Groups<br>Hotel Operators<br>National Trust<br>Event Organisers<br>Registrars |   |   |
| <b>To Develop A Distinctive Rural Tourism Offer</b> | Cycling<br>Rambling<br>Canals and Other Blue Spaces<br>Unique Habitats and Wildlife<br>Adrenalin Experiences<br>Gardens of Distinction<br>Farm Stays | <b>Walking:</b> the Bollington Walking Festival, the Gritstone Trail<br><b>Cycling:</b> Macclesfield forest<br><b>Canals:</b> the Cheshire Ring<br><b>Unique habitats:</b> Meres and Mosses around Cholmondeley/ Merefest<br><b>Adrenalin experiences:</b> the Cheshire Peak District<br><b>Gardens of Distinctions:</b> Tatton, Arley<br><b>Farm Experiences:</b> Cheshire Peak District | Marketing Cheshire<br>National Trust<br>Canal and River Trust   | Visit Peak District<br>Enjoy Staffordshire<br>Marketing Manchester<br>CWAC<br>British Cycling | Create the first genuinely coordinated rural tourism strategy to facilitate cross sector collaboration<br><br>Integrate existing partnerships into a joint approach and develop a highly targeted multichannel marketing campaign to reach key segments with specific propositions<br><br>Evaluate results and revise activity accordingly<br><br>➔ |



# Moving forward & getting organised



| Strategic priority  | Themes  | Locations  | Lead partners  | Other partners | Actions  |
|---|---|--|--|----------------|--|
| <b>To Increase Demand For Food Tourism</b>  | Revolution/<br>Scientific<br>Innovation<br>The Secrets of the Universe<br>Best market towns | Jodrell Bank<br>Knutsford,<br>Nantwich, Audlem                               | Cheshire/Amazed by Science<br>The National Trust               |                | Science and promote year round participation<br><br>Look for opportunities to bring more events and filming to key heritage and science locations  |
| <b>To Position Cheshire East As A Convenient And Desirable Business Tourism Destination</b> | Major Conferences<br>Quirky Venues<br>Film and TV Locations<br>Weddings                     | Airport catchment<br>Crewe<br>Picturesque villages and towns<br>e.g. Bunbury | Marketing Cheshire<br>Crewe Town Council<br>Manchester Airport | CWAC           | Encourage investment in more business class hotel rooms<br><br>Work closely with creative England and produce class leading information and case studies for film production<br><br>Organise regular familiarisation visits from London and bigger regional players<br><br>Promote Conferencing Cheshire and attend The Meeting Show with best product<br><br>Actively seek mid-size premium conferences with synergies to our locations<br><br>Market CE as "England's favourite wedding venue" |



# Moving forward & getting organised



| Strategic priority   | Themes  | Locations                                      | Lead partners                       | Other partners                           | Actions   |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>To Improve The Quality, Coordination And Marketing Of Cultural Events And Festivals</b> | RHS Tatton<br>Barnaby<br>Rewind<br>CPOP<br>Just So<br>Cheshire Show<br>Nantwich Festivals<br>other + opportunities e.g. Christmas | Tatton<br>Ashley<br>showground<br>Macclesfield | Venue owners<br>ACE                 |  | <p>Bid for ACE/ VE Cultural destinations funding to coordinate a marketing campaign around current offer</p> <p>Encourage large scale participation events that bring new visitors and of strategic importance e.g. Tour of Britain cycle</p> <p>Leverage RHS to develop a strong "summer season"</p> |
| <b>To Significantly Increase Leisure And Business Visits From international visitors</b>   | US<br>China<br>Australia<br>Europe  | Tatton<br>Jodrell<br>Knutsford                 | Visit Britain<br>Manchester Airport | Marketing<br>Manchester<br>Visit Britain | <p>Prioritise efforts to markets likely to deliver best ROI and who have the easiest access</p> <p>Work with partners across England to develop new thematic marketing programmes focused on overseas markets</p> <p>Create a trade marketing programme</p>   |

*Published by Cheshire East Council. April 2016*  
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*[www.discovercheshire.co.uk](http://www.discovercheshire.co.uk) or [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk)*