

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Gedling Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan 2026–2030

Date: Thursday 16 July 2026

Author: Assistant Director for Economic Growth & Regeneration

Wards Affected

All Wards

Purpose

To seek approval of the Gedling Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan (2026–2030), which sets out a coordinated approach to developing and promoting the Borough's visitor economy.

The Plan outlines a shared vision to enhance Gedling's visitor offer, increase visitor numbers and spend, and strengthen the contribution of tourism, leisure and heritage to the Borough's wider economic growth objectives.

Key Decision

This is a Key Decision as it is likely to have an impact on residents and communities working in more than two wards.

Recommendation(s)

THAT CABINET:

1. Approves the Gedling Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan (2026–2030) at Appendix E
2. Notes the findings within the appendices which have been considered as part of the development of the Gedling Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan (2026–2030).
3. Endorses the delivery of the Plan through continued partnership working with local, regional and national stakeholders.
4. Delegates authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth and Economy to make future updates to the Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan (2026–2030).

1. Background

- 1.1 In November 2024, Gedling Borough Council commissioned Focus Consultants to support the development of a Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan (VEDMP) that would establish a clear and coordinated approach to developing and promoting the Borough's visitor economy.
- 1.2 The Plan has been developed alongside the Gedling Economic Growth Framework and forms part of a wider programme of work aimed at strengthening Gedling's position within the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) area and maximising opportunities for economic growth, investment and regional collaboration.
- 1.3 The VEDMP sets out a shared statement of intent to manage Gedling as a visitor destination, coordinating activity across stakeholders to improve the visitor experience, develop the local offer and increase the economic contribution of the sector.
- 1.4 The VEDMP identifies that the Borough's visitor economy already makes a significant contribution, with approximately:
 - 3.12 million visitors annually
 - £185.68 million in economic impact
 - 1,781 full-time equivalent jobs supported

These figures highlight the importance of the visitor economy as a key contributor to the Borough's wider economic growth and employment base.

- 1.5 However, the Borough's visitor economy is currently dominated by day visitors, with limited overnight stays, highlighting the need to strengthen the overall visitor offer, improve dwell time and increase visitor spend.
- 1.6 A comprehensive range of activity has informed the development of the VEDMP, including:
 - Analysis of the strategic priorities of Gedling Borough Council and key stakeholders at local, regional and national levels
 - Economic and tourism data analysis, including STEAM (tourism) data
 - A Visitor Economy Audit reviewing market trends, visitor assets and infrastructure
 - One-to-one consultation with stakeholders and partner organisations
 - Engagement sessions with stakeholder groups
 - Public consultation and survey activity
 - A prioritisation workshop with Council representatives

This evidence-led approach has ensured that the VEDMP reflects both local needs and wider strategic priorities.

1.7 The VEDMP has also been developed through a structured process that included:

- Understanding the Borough's current visitor economy and market context
- Identifying key assets, opportunities and challenges
- Defining priority themes and target markets
- Developing a clear action plan with short, medium and long-term priorities

1.8 The work within the VEDMP has been commissioned to complement and align with related strategies, including the Economic Growth Framework, creating a clear 'golden thread' between activity and ensuring a coordinated and consistent approach to delivering economic growth across the Borough.

1.9 Eight core themes underpin the VEDMP, which together provide a comprehensive approach to developing the visitor economy across the Borough:

- Data and Intelligence
- Place Marketing
- Visitor Product
- Heritage
- Green and Open Spaces
- Leisure and Culture
- Town Centres
- Skills

These are supported by cross-cutting principles of accessibility, inclusivity, partnership working and collaboration.

1.10 The preparation of the VEDMP has identified a number of key opportunities to support the growth of Gedling's visitor economy, including:

- Strengthening place marketing and the Borough's destination identity
- Enhancing heritage and cultural assets
- Improving visitor infrastructure and connectivity
- Developing a more sustainable and accessible visitor offer
- Increasing visitor dwell time and overall spend

1.11 The VEDMP also identifies a number of key challenges, including:

- Lack of a strong destination identity
- Underdeveloped and fragmented visitor offer
- Limited visitor amenities, including accommodation
- Poor connectivity between key assets
- Changing role of town centres
- Support business growth and enterprise

1.12 As a result of these findings, a number of priority interventions have been identified to support the Council in developing the visitor economy, including:

- Development of a Gedling Place Marketing Strategy
- Creation of visitor itineraries and improved wayfinding
- Investment in heritage assets and cultural infrastructure
- Enhancements to green spaces and active travel routes
- Regeneration and diversification of town and local centres
- Strengthening skills and workforce development in the visitor economy

1.13 The VEDMP does not set out an exhaustive list of projects; instead, it establishes a flexible structure through which a range of activities and initiatives can be developed and delivered over time. This approach ensures the VEDMP remains adaptable to changing priorities, funding opportunities and external conditions, whilst enabling longer-term ambitions to be progressed as opportunities arise.

1.14 The implementation of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) during the lifetime of the VEDMP will create both opportunities and challenges for the delivery of visitor economy priorities. While future governance arrangements may alter the structures through which economic development, tourism and place marketing activities are delivered, the VEDMP provides a clear strategic framework that can support continuity of vision and investment throughout the transition period. The VEDMP will help ensure that Gedling's visitor economy assets, heritage offer and growth opportunities are recognised within any future unitary authority arrangements, whilst also positioning the Borough to benefit from increased strategic coordination, economies of scale and strengthened destination management activity across a wider geography. The flexible nature of the VEDMP will enable priorities and delivery mechanisms to be adapted as new governance arrangements emerge, ensuring continued alignment with regional and sub-regional economic growth objectives.

3 Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet approves the Gedling Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan (2026–2030).

3.2 Notes the findings within the other appendices which have been considered as part of the Gedling Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan (2026–2030).

3.3 Endorses the delivery of the Plan through continued partnership working with local, regional and national stakeholders.

3.4 Delegates authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth and Economy to make

further updates to the Gedling Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan (2026–2030).

4 Alternative Options

4.1 Not to approve the VEDMP.

This option is not recommended, as it would:

- Limit the Council's ability to coordinate visitor economy activity
- Reduce opportunities to secure external funding
- Result in fragmented delivery of initiatives
- Weaken alignment with regional and national priorities

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The development of the VEDMP has been undertaken utilising UKSPF funding and officer time. The VEDMP does not commit the Council to specific expenditure.

5.2 Delivery will be supported through a range of funding sources, including:

- Existing Council resources
- External funding opportunities
- Partnership and private sector investment

6 Legal Implications

6.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from approval of the VEDMP.

6.3 All delivery activity will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's financial regulations and procurement processes.

7 Equalities Implications

7.1 The VEDMP promotes accessibility and inclusivity by:

- Improving access to visitor attractions and facilities
- Supporting a diverse range of users and communities
- Encouraging inclusive growth within the visitor economy

8 Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications

8.1 The VEDMP supports the Council's climate commitments through:

- Promotion of sustainable and eco-tourism
- Investment in green infrastructure
- Encouraging active and sustainable travel
- Supporting low-carbon development

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A - Visitor Economy Audit

9.2 Appendix B - Visitor Economy Consultation Main Findings

9.3 Appendix C - Consultation Survey Analysis

9.4 Appendix D - Visitor Economy Strategic Alignment

9.5 Appendix E - Gedling Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan - June 26

9.6 Appendix F - Appendix 9 - VEDMP EIA

10 Background Papers

10.1 None identified.

11 Reasons for Recommendations

11.1 Approval of the VEDMP will provide a clear and coordinated framework for developing Gedling's visitor economy.

11.2 It will enable the Council to align priorities and investment, strengthen partnership working, maximise opportunities for external funding, and increase the economic contribution of the visitor economy.

11.3 Failure to approve the VEDMP would limit the Council's ability to effectively plan and deliver visitor economy activity and realise the Borough's full growth potential.

Statutory Officer Approval

Approved by:

Date:

Deputy Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:

Date:

Monitoring Officer