



# GEDLING VISITOR ECONOMY DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

June 2026



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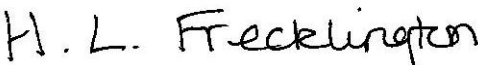
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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 What is a Destination Management Plan?

As defined by Visit England, destination management is a process of leading, influencing and coordinating the management of all the aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience, taking account of the needs of visitors, local residents, businesses and the environment.

A Destination Management Plan (DMP) is a shared statement of intent to manage a destination over a stated period of time, articulating the roles of the different stakeholders and identifying clear actions that they will take and where appropriate the apportionment of resources.

The plan will help to guide Gedling Borough Council in collaboration with its key stakeholders to develop interventions and actions that can attract promote place and products, develop the visitor offer, and realise the latent value of the sector to the wider economy.

The Destination Management Plan has been developed within the context of emerging discussions around Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) which represents the most significant structural change to local government in more than 50 years. Future reorganisation will clearly impact on the delivery of activities set out in this Plan, but it also provides a basis to help inform any visitor economy strategies of a new unitary council encompassing the current borough of Gedling.

## 1.2 Background

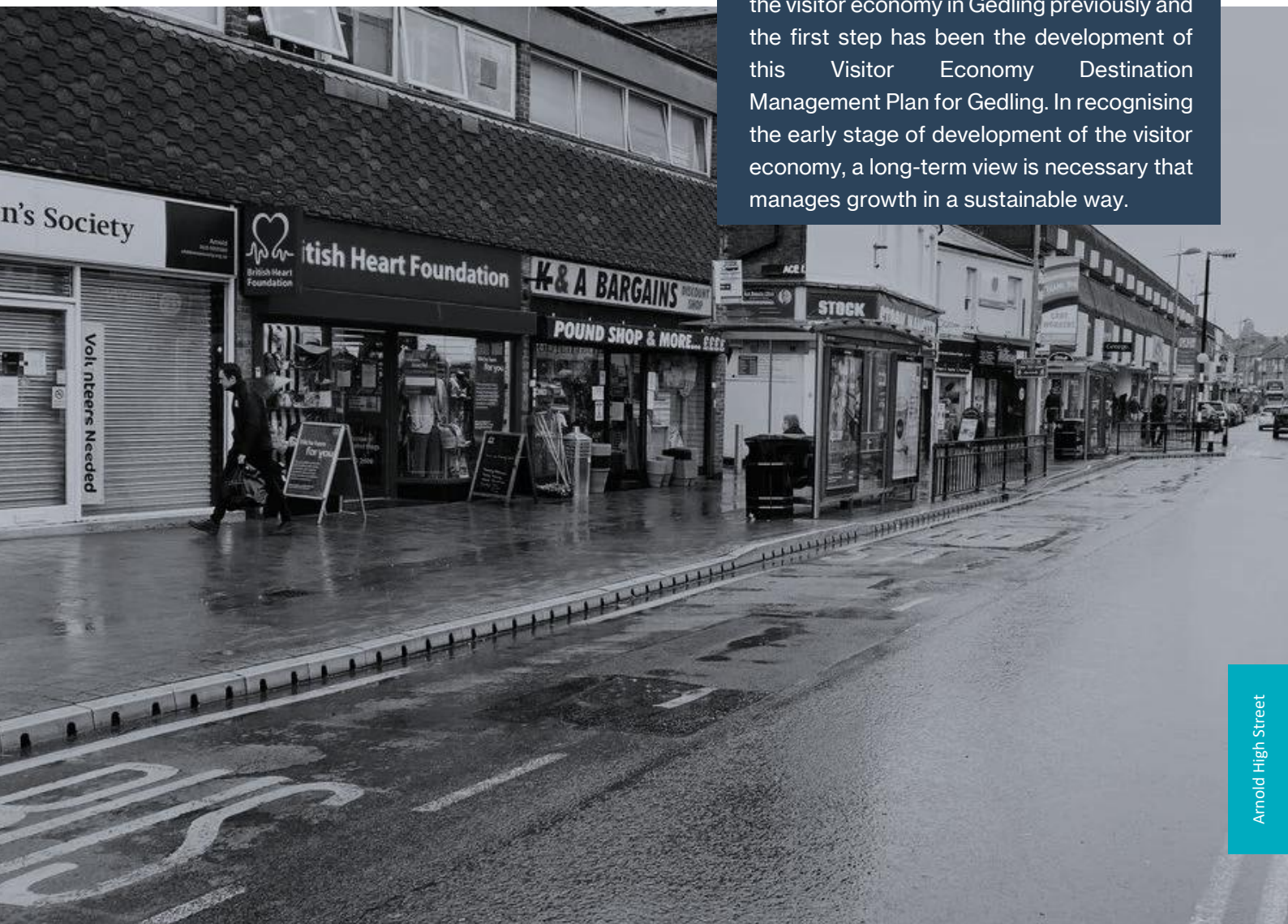
This Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan outlines the ambitions and targets for Gedling's visitor economy over for 2026-2030.

The Plan sets out a number of actions that could maximise the benefits of the visitor economy to support growth across the Borough. These aim to drive economic growth, enhance cultural vibrancy, and improve sustainability in Gedling's visitor economy. The DMP has been produced alongside a new Economic Growth Framework for 2026-2030 and should be viewed collectively. These documents collectively demonstrate a strong ambition and opportunity to grow Gedling's visitor economy and ensure that a cohesive overarching ambition for Gedling Borough is created.

This Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan provides an overarching narrative to promote Gedling to visitors, whilst coordinating efforts to address challenges around the lack of identity, product awareness and hospitality network.

It outlines a shared statement of intent to improve Gedling's appeal to visitors, informed through extensive consultation, an analysis of the local visitor economy, and the strategic priorities identified by Gedling Borough Council and other key stakeholders. The Destination Management Plan further identifies the required actions and players to achieve these ambitions and targets.

It is recognised that there has been little coordinated promotion or development of the visitor economy in Gedling previously and the first step has been the development of this Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan for Gedling. In recognising the early stage of development of the visitor economy, a long-term view is necessary that manages growth in a sustainable way.





### 1.3 Approach

#### **A range of activity has informed the development of the Economic Growth Framework including:**

- Analysis of the strategic goals of Gedling Borough Council and stakeholders at a local, regional and national level.
- Analysis of STEAM data quantifying the local impact of tourism on Gedling.
- Visitor Economy Audit featuring a review of market trends, visitor data, key visitor assets and tourism infrastructure, found in Appendix A.
- One-to-one consultation sessions with over 50 individual Council or stakeholder representatives.
- Group consultation sessions with over 10 different stakeholder groups. A summary of the main consultation findings is in Appendix B.
- Online public consultation, completed by 71 people, a summary of which can be found in Appendix C.

- Online survey with tourism and hospitality businesses, completed by 6 organisations.
- Prioritisation workshop with representatives of Gedling Borough Council.
- Review of relevant strategies and policies and they key messages which can be found in Appendix D.

This activity has informed the establishment of a Destination Management Plan that sets out the main themes, challenges, assets, product and markets for Gedling's visitor economy.

#### **The plan also acknowledges and integrates the regeneration strategies already underway:**

- **Ambition Arnold:** a vision and plan for Arnold town centre that prioritises accessibility, inclusion, and community pride, aligning with the council's vision for a vibrant town centre.
- **Greater Carlton Pride in Place (PiP):** a £20m endowment style fund to use on community projects to regenerate the area over a 10-year period.

## 2.0 Vision

### 2.1 Vision

The Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan centres around the following overarching vision:

*Through enhanced place marketing, cultural investment, and improved connectivity, Gedling will transition from a place people pass through to a place they choose to explore, stay, and enjoy. By leveraging its hidden heritage, revitalising leisure and tourism infrastructure, and by taking advantage of its rich natural assets, Gedling will become a sustainable visitor destination and a key part of Nottinghamshire's visitor offer.*

Underpinning the vision is the recognition that coordination with neighbouring areas and assets – plus participation in regional initiatives - will be critical to achieving this. Collaboration on cross-border initiatives will strengthen the region as a whole and in turn the borough of Gedling.



Stock Image

## 3.0 Current Situation

### 3.1 Market Trends

#### 3.1.1 How the Market is Changing

Hospitality and tourism play a key role in the everyday economy in Nottinghamshire, supporting thousands of jobs and operating at the heart of communities across the nation. Based on the latest 2023 STEAM tourism data measuring trends and impact of visitor economy in the region, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have witnessed a significant increase, underlining the importance of tourism in driving local economic growth and job creation.

A third of UK cities are considered domestic visitor 'destinations' - which pull overnight visitors from further afield and get them to spend more during their city breaks, and even sustain a broader range of retail, leisure, and food and drink amenities than places with fewer visitors.

The sustained growth across multiple indicators, from visitor volume to spend and the number of jobs, highlights Nottinghamshire's growing reputation as a leading visitor destination. Recent increased investment into the visitor offer and product – such as Sherwood Observatory, St Mary Magdalene Church in Hucknall, and the new play area at Sherwood Pines – alongside strategic marketing initiatives from Visit Nottinghamshire like the visitor guide, a B2C website attracting over 4 million visitors annually, and PR reach exceeding 251 million, places the region on a strong trajectory to attract even more visitors in the future.

At a national level, the UK government has committed to a new ambition to welcome 50 million international visitors per year by 2030 as part of its plans for the country to remain one of the most visited worldwide, driving economic growth. Growth in the tourism industry beyond London will be at the heart of this strategy.

While the capital is a huge draw that brings in tens of millions of visitors each year, there is vast potential for increasing visits to other cities and regions, which can be achieved through improved marketing, reforming tourist boards, filling skills gaps in the visitor economy and better celebrating our culture.

Locally, this represents a significant and increasing stream of inward investment. Gedling's range and quality of visitor attractions and tourism and hospitality businesses across the Borough, and the opportunities for their future development, represent strong potential for increased growth. Raising and enhancing the profile of a place also leads to a greater sense of civic pride and often acts as a catalyst for civic development and regeneration.

#### 3.1.2 Impact of the Visitor Economy

All strategies and policies need to be rooted in local evidence. The following analysis of visitor data is based on the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) which is widely acknowledged as the industry standard with high levels of accuracy down to district level. Insight gained from STEAM and ensures our ambitions – including increasing the volume of visitors, dwell time and visitor experience - are based on realistic performance measures.

The tourism/visitor economy makes a significant contribution the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA) area economy, worth around £5.25bn in 2023 and supporting around 52,000 jobs. The aim is to take up numerous opportunities to grow the value of the sector, both in terms of direct economic impact and wider benefits that support EMCCA's inclusive growth objectives.

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have witnessed a significant increase, underlining the importance of tourism in driving local economic growth and job creation. The total value of tourism in Nottingham city and county in 2023 reached an outstanding economic impact of £2.36 billion, marking a 15.40% increase from the previous period. This reflects the rising appeal of the region as a top destination for both day and overnight visitors.

In 2023, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire welcomed 34.33 million visitors, an increase of 4.12%. The average spend per visitor continues to climb as well, with an overall rise of 10.81% to £68.94 economic impact per trip.

The heritage economy is an important contributor; Historic England estimated that for every £1 of GVA that the sector directly generates, an additional £1.93 is added to the wider economy.

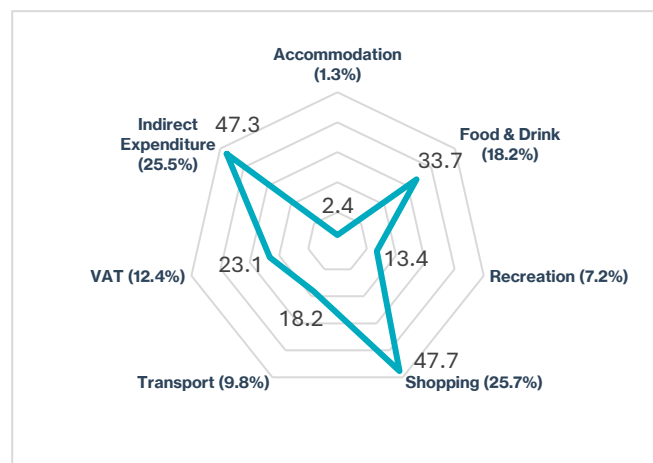
Gedling itself saw 3.12m visitors (across 3.49m Visitor Days) bring in £185.68m in Economic Impact. Gedling has opportunities to strengthen its tourism offer and attract a larger share of visitor spending.

This represents a 2.7% increase from the £180.87m 2022 figure.

Gedling’s visitor economy has a significant opportunity to contribute to the Borough’s wider economic growth prospects:

- 15,000 FTE jobs are supported by tourism in Nottinghamshire (excluding City) and visitors bring in £1.24bn to the local economy. Gedling itself supports just 1,781 of these FTE jobs.
- Growth in Gedling’s visitor economy is already underway. Visitor numbers and visitor days increased by 4.1% and 3.5% respectively between 2022 and 2023.
- Gedling’s visitor economy is dominated by day visitors, of which there were 2.83m in 2023.
- Overnight stays represent a significant opportunity to generate further economic growth through increased dwell-time and customer spend. Whilst staying visitors account for just 8% of all visitors, the same group is responsible for 23% of the overall Economic Impact.
- 90% of staying visitors choose to stay with friends and family. Serviced accommodation and non-serviced accommodation account for just 10.5%.
- Gedling’s visitor economy is largely reliant on Shopping and Food and Drink, which account for 41.4% and 29.2% of Direct Economic Impact respectively. Recreation (11.6%) and Accommodation (2.1%) represent comparatively small sections of the visitor economy’s Economic Impact. There are significant opportunities to develop and enhance these sectors to exploit hitherto underdeveloped opportunities to generate growth.

**Figure 1: Sectoral Distribution of Economic Impact - £m Including VAT Indexed to 2023**



<b>3.12m</b> Total Visitors	
	<b>£185.68m</b> Economic Impact
<b>1,781</b> FTEs in Gedling Visitor Economy	
	<b>+4.1%</b> Visitor Numbers 2022-23
<b>+3.5%</b> Visitor Days 2022-23	
	<b>15,000</b> FTEs in Nottinghamshire Visitor Economy
<b>603</b> Total Beds	
	<b>169</b> Hotel Beds
<b>434</b> Non-Serviced Beds	



## 4.0 Key Assets and Products

### 4.1 History and Heritage

Gedling Borough has a rich and diverse heritage drawing from its early beginnings, through its social and industrial legacies (coal mining, framework knitting, brick-making, railways, water infrastructure) to the communities that reflect the ongoing culture within Gedling today. The Visitor Economy Framework positions heritage – including literary figures, medieval sites, and industrial innovation – as core to the visitor experience. Heritage in the Borough has the potential to drive and promote regeneration and renewal of its most deprived communities. Heritage also offers more employment and volunteering opportunities to complement those already in place if the potential of the Borough's undoubted assets can be realised.

The Borough boasts heritage of local, regional, national and international significance.

R4217 Gedling Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan - June 26 - post SLT

Newstead Abbey, home of Lord Byron, is perhaps the Borough's most famous landmark.

Other less well known but equally important assets include Papplewick Pumping Station and Bestwood Winding Engine.

The Borough is the birthplace of William Lee, inventor of the mechanised stocking frame in Calverton in 1589; of Richard Parkes Bonington, the renowned 19th century landscape artist; and of Thomas Hawkesley, who designed and built Britain's first high pressure constant supply water system, preventing the deaths of countless millions of people around the world. Industrial heritage, social history and ancient monuments are combined with an immensely varied natural environment in a Borough that offers a range of diverse yet overlapping heritage.

But much of this potential is relatively untapped. Challenges around the extent of Borough-wide knowledge; the sharing and dissemination of that knowledge; the condition of some key local assets; the resilience of arrangements to maintain and promote those assets and the capacity to support future work all currently mitigate against further substantial progress. A more coordinated approach to promoting cultural and historical assets could help reinforce local identity and attract more visitors.

**The process of developing this Destination Management Plan has identified a number of key heritage assets which have the greatest potential to contribute to the visitor economy:**

- **Bestwood Lodge Hotel** – potential to be a significant tourism anchor but requires significant improvements to the existing offer.
- **Papplewick Pumping Station** – Potential to be connected to other nearby heritage assets as part of a cohesive visitor experience. Somewhat isolated and disconnected with little in the way of signage, wayfinding or interpretation, but with significant potential for redevelopment.
- **Newstead Abbey** – a site with both regional and international importance.



Gedling Leisure Centre

## 4.2 Green and Open Spaces

Gedling's parks, nature reserves, and country parks are significant assets that can be further utilised to enhance the desirability of Gedling as a place to visit.

The Borough's four designated Local Nature Reserves are Gedling House Wood and Meadow; Netherfield Lagoons and The Hobbucks (to the north of Arnold). There is strong community ownership of and engagement with these sites, with all four being managed by local conservation groups. Other notable landscape features include Lambley Dumbles and Moor Pond Woods, each of which are of historic importance with considerable heritage value.

The Borough's four areas of park land over 10 hectares include Bestwood Country Park; Gedling Country Park and Newstead Abbey, all of which have significant heritage connections. Opening in 2015, Gedling Country Park is the most recent of these – with its strong links to the Borough's mining heritage, this Country Park is being promoted as a future focal point for the Borough's heritage activity.

EMCCA's Strategic Framework supports enhanced green spaces, whilst the Gedling Green Space Strategy values parks and gardens as integral to the lives of the communities in which they are located; the Strategy encourages protection and conservation; the development of a green corridor network potentially using dismantled railway lines; and the creation of more circular routes – all as part of a network of 'green lungs' across the district.

From a visitor economy perspective, it will be vital to maximise the opportunities for income generation within the spaces owned by Gedling Borough Council, considering opportunities for local businesses to operate from these spaces without impacting on the quality of the open space as well as promoting opportunities for visitors to increase their dwell time in the Borough by visiting local retail and hospitality businesses. There are also opportunities for further investment in green infrastructure, including enhanced trails, walking and cycling infrastructure, and visitor facilities, as well as using the natural assets as a foundation of a sustainable tourism offer.

**The process of developing this Destination Management Plan has identified a number of key assets for which there is the greatest opportunity for enhancement:**

- **Gedling Country Park** - with an estimated 500,000 annual visitors - could develop a distinct visitor experience and is thought to be popular enough to support additional activities on site, such as bike hire to support health and wellbeing. Considered the primary location for a new visitor centre that could include heritage interpretation, educational spaces, a café, and could signpost to other offers in the Borough.
- **Bestwood Country Park** – potential to explore rural accommodation options such as camping or eco-lodges to complement any hotel offer on-site.
- **Netherfield Lagoons** – scope to enhance the site to take advantage of its significant natural environment and biodiversity as part of an eco-tourism offer, and to better connect the site via the former railway line, further encouraging active travel. However, the site isn't under Gedling Borough Council's remit, which limits the level of influence around this site.

### 4.3 Leisure Offer

Community and leisure facilities, as well as health and wellbeing, are a strategically important element of the visitor economy offer to Gedling's communities and visitors alike. 24.9% of the Gedling population currently use one of the leisure venues. Attendances across the 5 leisure centres have grown steadily over the last few years, with attendance for 2024/25 expected to exceed overall targets and surpass 1.17m visitors; annual attendances are now expected to reach 12% higher than pre-Covid levels. Annual visitor numbers at the Bonington Theatre far exceeded the target set for 2023/24, with 47,500 attendances

A need to transform the current leisure centre provision operated by the Council has been identified, including new facilities for both the Arnold and Carlton areas that not only protects the current level of indoor facility and cultural provision but also provides enhanced facilities to meet the future demand for health and wellbeing activities. Ambition Arnold aims to redevelop leisure, library and theatre facilities into a vibrant community hub in Arnold.

New state-of-the-art leisure facilities could be a real draw for people who live in the city.

Sport England guidance commits to a direction of travel that will see public sector leisure transition from a leisure service to an active wellbeing service. This approach is built on: social prescribing, co-location, delivery of preventative activity, and collaboration through Integrated Care Systems.

**The process of developing this Destination Management Plan has identified a number of key leisure and culture assets which have the greatest potential to contribute to the visitor economy:**

- **Carlton Active Leisure Centre** – new centre should provide state-of-the-art facilities that have the potential to attract visitors from the surrounding area. Potential to host a Community Hub that co-locates different services.
- **Arnold Leisure Centre** – plans are in place to upgrade Arnold's leisure centre already subject to funding opportunities
- **Bonington Theatre** - a high-performing cultural asset with regional appeal but it is outdated. Plans include upgrading it into a dedicated venue with two cinema screens and an improved theatre programme to drive economic and cultural growth in Arnold, subject to funding opportunities.
- **Arnold Market** - The Ambition Arnold Masterplan seeks to improve the leisure and cultural opportunities available within the town centre to increase footfall and add vibrancy to the town. Arnold's market day footfall is strong, at 112% above the national small towns average. Management of the market needs to be reviewed.

### 4.4 Towns and Villages

Named in the Top 50 places to live in Britain in 2020, Gedling has a great many strengths, including a range of market towns and picturesque countryside villages. Stretching from the River Trent in the south east to Sherwood Forest in the north west, its settlements include once separate communities that have become part of the Greater Nottingham conurbation as well as ten rural parishes incorporating country villages which have retained their rural charm. The mix of suburban areas and a rural hinterland offer a range of varied opportunities and can differentiate Gedling as a visitor destination.

Crucial to economic growth, these vibrant towns and villages are a fundamental part of attracting visitors and leisure users to Gedling. Market towns, when lively and attractive, generate local jobs and meet people's changing shopping and leisure habits. These areas provide cultural landmarks, outdoor recreation opportunities, and local businesses that help shape Gedling as a welcoming and attractive destination.

Gedling's town centres play a crucial role in attracting visitors by offering a mix of independent shops, cafés, markets, and cultural events that bring life and activity to the borough. Whilst the main settlements in the urban area of the Borough – **Arnold, Carlton, Calverton, Mapperley, Netherfield and Gedling** – are in close proximity to Nottingham, each offers a distinct character, rich heritage, and unique attractions that contribute to a diverse and engaging visitor experience. Investing in the public realm, creating pedestrian-friendly spaces, and supporting local businesses will ensure that town centres become destinations in their own right, rather than just places people pass through.

Gedling's smaller rural villages – **Linby, Woodborough, Lambley, and Bestwood** – are all covered in some way by Conservation Areas, and each boasts varied (if underdeveloped) identities, from historic industrial settlements to rolling agricultural landscapes. These areas serve as gateways to heritage sites, outdoor and adventure tourism, benefiting from walking and cycling routes, country parks, and green spaces.

By celebrating the unique character of each town and village, improving the visitor product, and developing a cohesive tourism offer, Gedling can shift from being a place people travel through to a place they deliberately choose to visit, explore, and stay. Through collaboration with local businesses, cultural organisations, and visitor attractions, Gedling's towns and villages can work together to offer a compelling



Lambley Village

## 5.0 Opportunities

### 5.1 Digital Connectivity

Digital connectivity and infrastructure is seen as one of Nottinghamshire's key strengths from which to create a resilient and forward-looking economy. EMCCA's Place Prospectus similarly outlines a bold vision for inclusive and sustainable growth, positioning the county as a hub for innovation, tourism, and green development – based in part on enhancements to digital connectivity to improve access.

Nottinghamshire County Council aim to transform Nottinghamshire into the most digitally connected county across the UK - making sure every resident, business, and organisation in Nottinghamshire can access the online world, without barriers. With the growing reliance on technology for travel planning, wayfinding, and engagement, investing in digital infrastructure and strategies can boost tourism, enhance visitor satisfaction, and support local businesses.

For the visitor economy, leveraging digital connectivity can provide more engaging and interactive methods of exploring Gedling's heritage and culture. Investing in public Wi-Fi, digital wayfinding, and digital marketing will make Gedling a more connected, accessible, and attractive visitor destination.

#### Opportunities around digital connectivity include:

- **Free Public Wi-Fi in Key Visitor Areas:** offering free, high-speed Wi-Fi in town centres, heritage sites, parks, and key visitor locations can encourage longer stays and enhance engagement. Visitors rely on internet access for maps, local recommendations, and sharing their experiences on social media, which can help market Gedling organically. Wi-Fi networks can also be used to collect visitor data (e.g., footfall analytics) to improve tourism strategies.
- **Digital Marketing and Wayfinding:** implementing interactive digital kiosks and QR code-enabled signage in visitor hotspots can improve navigation and provide instant access to local stories, events,

maps, and itineraries, as well as public transport information and even local business promotions.

- **Data-Driven Targeting & Digital Advertising:** using AI-driven marketing campaigns to target specific visitor groups (heritage tourists, adventure seekers, event-goers), or geo-targeted digital advertising to attract visitors from Nottingham, the East Midlands, and beyond.
- **Digital Innovation:** supporting tech businesses in Gedling to develop digital tools and solutions for the visitor economy, such as a digital tourism hub or incubator space for innovation in VR tourism experiences, or smart tourism applications.
- **Improving Accessibility and Connectivity:** ensure that rural attractions, trails, and nature sites have strong mobile coverage and fast broadband to enhance visitor experience.

### 5.2 Sustainability

Sustainability is becoming an increasingly important factor in tourism, with visitors seeking eco-friendly travel options, nature-based experiences, and responsible tourism initiatives. Gedling has a unique opportunity to position itself as a sustainable visitor destination, enhancing its natural assets, and supporting the local economy. Nottinghamshire County Council's Visitor Economy Strategy (2019-2029) places a focus on green and active tourism, whilst EMCCA are aiming to enhance sustainability in the visitor economy.

#### Opportunities around sustainability include:

- **Public Transport and Active Travel:** encouraging public transport use by improving access to key visitor assets by buses and public transport for visitors, whilst developing cycleways and walkways between key attractions as well as electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure at key locations. Investing in better signposting, safe cycling lanes, and bike hire schemes could encourage visitors to explore the area sustainably. Promoting eco-friendly travel itineraries, such as walking tours, cycling trails, and low-carbon tourism options.

### 5.3 Accessibility

In 2019, the Tourism Sector Deal saw the UK government pledge for the UK to become Europe's most accessible destination for disabled visitors.

However, some representatives of visitor and heritage assets in the area felt that their sites are currently unable to meet accessibility needs, particularly where the budget for accommodations is limited.

Improving accessibility in Gedling's visitor economy presents a major opportunity to attract a wider range of visitors, including those with disabilities, older adults, families with young children, and those with other mobility needs. These improvements not only expand the visitor base but also enhance the experience for all, fostering a more sustainable and visitor-friendly economy. By prioritising inclusive tourism, Gedling can increase visitor numbers, improve visitor satisfaction, and enhance its reputation as a welcoming destination.

- **Enhancing Physical Accessibility at Key Attractions:** upgrading pathways, trails, entrances and step-free access at key attractions to ensure they are wheelchair-accessible and free from physical barriers will improve accessibility. Installing ramps, lifts, disabled parking and accessible seating areas at historical sites, parks, and public spaces will add to the appeal. Parks in the area that have implemented accessibility measures such as paved path routes reported having seen an expanse in demographics of the visitors to the park, including more individuals with access needs making use of the spaces.

- **Digital and Informational Accessibility:** ensure that visitor information websites are usable by people with visual impairments or cognitive disabilities, whilst developing accessible visitor guides and maps with large-print, braille, and audio formats. Sensory-friendly experiences could be offered at key visitor attractions.

- **Promoting Gedling as an Inclusive Destination:** targeting accessible tourism markets, including older visitors, disabled travellers, and families,

- **Sustainable Visitor Offer:** promoting farm-to-fork offers and sustainable accommodation options could attract environmentally conscious visitors, whilst offering incentives for accommodations to invest in solar panels, water conservation, and waste reduction measures enhances the visitor economy's green credentials. Encouraging visitors to support local artisans, markets, and independent retailers rather than large chains could drive footfall to town centres.
- **Enhancing Green Spaces and Eco-Tourism:** Gedling's green and open spaces offer prime opportunities for eco-tourism. Investing in wildlife conservation projects, and biodiversity initiatives can make these areas more attractive to nature-based tourists. Partnering with conservation groups to develop eco-friendly visitor experiences such as guided wildlife walks, birdwatching tours, and sustainable foraging experiences could prove popular.



whilst highlighting accessible itineraries that showcase routes and attractions that cater to different needs.

## 6.0 Challenges

### 6.1 Lack of Identity and Promotion

Gedling lacks a strong standalone identity as a visitor destination but there is an opportunity to develop identities around different themes that will draw people to the borough, capitalising on assets, such as Gedling Country Park, Bestwood Country Park, Papplewick Pumping Station and Newstead Abbey to name a few. Whilst there are already a wide range of events throughout the year these are not necessarily co-ordinated, promoted and integrated to best effect. The Economic Growth Framework prioritises the promotion of a cohesive visitor experience.

There has been little coordinated promotion or development of the visitor economy in Gedling previously and the first step has been the development of a Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan for Gedling which provides a shared statement of intent to manage Gedling as a visitor destination, as part of a broader Nottinghamshire visitor offer. Linked to this has been the development of a new Gedling Heritage Strategy, recognising that the Borough's heritage is an opportunity which could be better utilised to attract visitors.

Whilst parks and open spaces contribute significantly to Gedling's sense of place and environmental quality, more needs to be done to determine how they can contribute to the visitor economy. There are opportunities to better promote Gedling's green spaces and natural landscapes, and underutilised assets such as Netherfield Lagoons as well as opportunities for further investment in green infrastructure, including enhanced trails, walking and cycling infrastructure, and visitor facilities.

### 6.2 Underdeveloped Visitor Assets

Previous strategy development has identified a fragmented visitor offer, with much of Gedling's heritage hidden, lost, or deteriorated. However, there is a lot of heritage related activity taking place within Gedling and key heritage assets including Newstead Abbey, Papplewick Pumping Station and Bestwood

Winding Engine as well as important industrial heritage stories around mining and textiles.

However, heritage assets are underutilised and lack investment compared to other areas, limiting their impact on tourism and community identity. There is significant 'hidden heritage' that could be taken advantage of to both engage residents in local culture, and to attract visitors from further afield. The Gedling Heritage Strategy (2018) says that the Borough has a comparatively high percentage (11%) of listed building assets in a poor condition - these include a number of buildings and structures in and around some of the Borough's most notable heritage assets, including Newstead Abbey and Papplewick Pumping Station.

### 6.3 Limited Visitor Amenities

Leisure and culture have an important role in building social capital and supporting the economic growth of the borough. Gedling's visitor economy is currently dominated by Day Visitors, most of whom stay with friends and family, and very few in serviced or non-serviced accommodation. An average day visitor in Nottinghamshire (excluding City) spends £39 (2019 figures); an average overnight visitor spends £193, and overnight commercial visitors spend an average of £299.

Gedling would benefit from addressing the lack of visitor amenities such as accommodation, dining, and entertainment options to encourage longer stays. The D2N2 Visitor Accommodation Strategy found that Gedling was home to just 0.3% of accommodation establishments in the LEP area in 2016. Limited accommodation options hinder the potential for extended stays, which could otherwise boost the local visitor economy.

However, Gedling itself supports 1,781 total FTE jobs in the visitor economy, just 7.9% of the 22,437 FTEs in Nottinghamshire. There are just 64 FTEs in employment in Gedling in accommodation.

Growing populations and increased popularity will require further investment in leisure and supporting infrastructure such as hospitality to encourage

visitors to stay for longer. Gedling needs to develop more entertainment, hospitality, and leisure options to strengthen both the lunch-time and night-time economy; the promotion of more independent retailers, food and beverage outlets, and experiential businesses, could help to mitigate the declining footfall so closely linked to traditional retail town centre offers.

However, financial sustainability has been identified as the underpinning theme of the strategy work to date, particularly as the current service arrangements for Gedling's leisure centres require a subsidy of circa £2m per year. With ageing facilities and rising costs, investment in solar panels, heat pumps, and other sustainability measures is also an option.

## 6.4 Connectivity

Internal connectivity within the borough and between key areas is limited. More needs to be done to promote existing transport links, and to explore connectivity between green spaces, retail parks and leisure destinations, which is thought to be poor. There is also an opportunity to better link and connect the Borough's blue and green infrastructure with its heritage and visitor assets with improved active travel routes. External accessibility for visitors, particularly for key visitor assets, is also limited.

As a result, there is a heavy reliance on cars; 18.9% of households have no car/van (compared to 23.5% nationally), whilst 7.3% of adults participated in cycling for travel (compared to 11.3% nationally). Whilst the level of car ownership is an enabler for people to access key sites and locations, in order to be more inclusive and sustainable, alternative public or active transport options should be explored.

There is however an opportunity to encourage sustainable travel and active travel to visitor and leisure destinations. The active environment and active travel provide opportunities for people to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives.

Improved transport can also help position Gedling has a hub for business, leisure and culture in the East Midlands. There are a number of long-term ambitions around extending Nottingham's tram network into Gedling, and to transform disused railway lines into eco-friendly transport corridors that integrate the area's heritage, but this requires significant investment.

The Economic Growth Framework notes how spending and delivery in areas such as transport – under the remit of EMCCA – can help the visitor economy to thrive, by helping improve transport connectivity for visitors and those working in the sector.

Coordination with neighbouring areas and participation in regional initiatives will be critical, particularly collaboration on cross-border initiatives, such as transport infrastructure.

There is a need to collaborate with bus operators and transport authorities to improve key routes and integrate Gedling into broader transit networks.

## 6.5 Redefining the High Street

Crucial to economic growth, vibrant town and local centres are a fundamental part of attracting visitors and leisure users to Gedling.

Overall, Gedling's retail vacancy rate (9.6%) is below national (14.4%) and there is generally a good selection of independent retailers. However, over the last five years, within Arnold, Netherfield and Carlton, vacancy rates have climbed and there are notable gaps left by vacant shops. Poorly maintained or vacant properties negatively impact the area's appearance and deter investment and visitors.

Once reliant on retail, increasing vacancy rates are testament to a need for a diversification of town centres as vibrant, mixed-use destinations attractive to residents and visitors along with a strong day to evening economy. Town centres will need to develop a more experiential offer, hosting pop-up shows, regular events and cultural activities to increase footfall and engagement. Public realm improvements, pedestrianisation, better integration of green spaces and an enhanced sense of arrival can enhance the appeal and make the areas more attractive.

Villages could integrate community amenities and services like GP practices and dentists to serve as community hubs focusing on experiential opportunities and social services. Where retail remains paramount, independent shops can differentiate high streets from retail parks and still create a draw for shoppers.

Moreover, SMEs play a crucial role in the visitor economy, yet they often face barriers to growth and

require funding/training programs tailored to their evolving needs. High street retail and hospitality face recruitment challenges, requiring targeted skills development. With the UK Shared Prosperity Fund scheduled to end in 2026, a strategy for supporting businesses in the visitor economy – including retail and the high street – needs to be considered.

## 7.0 Target Markets

There is little comprehensive data on our visitor markets and their characteristics. Anecdotal feedback indicates that visitors are generally relatively local – typically coming from within the Borough, and from neighbouring areas (Nottingham, Mansfield) although some visitors are coming from much further afield attracted by attractions with a regional appeal (like Newstead Abbey).

Nottinghamshire’s two markets identified as having growth potential for day trips and UK short breaks are **Country Loving Traditionalists** and **Aspirational Fun Families**. These are two segments identified as priorities by Visit England, selected because they have a strong fit with what Nottinghamshire can offer. Nottinghamshire’s central location means it has a large audience within a two-hour drive time. These near markets provide excellent opportunities to build loyal repeat day visitors and near short breaks among people who are likely to enjoy what the county has to offer. Other destinations will be targeting these segments too. There are opportunities to grow Gedling’s tourism by collaborating with the rest of the county to achieve maximum reach where it makes sense to do so.

**Country Loving Traditionalists** – empty nesters with traditional values, who are likely to have recently taken a countryside break in England. They travel as a couple, looking for unspoilt countryside and want to feel “connected to the country’s history and heritage” with opportunities to eat local food and produce.

**Aspirational Family Fun** - information-hungry, living in cities with children at home. They regularly take breaks where they can indulge in active, family-friendly pursuits, such as sporting events and festivals. They like water-based activities. They are active on social media.



Whilst Gedling lacks a strong standalone identity as a visitor destination, there is an opportunity to develop identities around different themes that will draw people to the borough.

**In consultation with stakeholders and partners, we believe the following target markets are a good fit for what Gedling has to offer:**

### 7.1 Locals and Day Trippers

All tourists are visitors, but not all visitors are tourists. Local visits are important too. We want residents and visitors to explore and enjoy the Nottinghamshire countryside, attractions, market towns and villages, and to enjoy our fascinating stories.

Day-trippers and local visitors represent a key market for Gedling’s visitor economy because they are the most immediate and accessible audience. Given Gedling’s location, current visitor offerings, and infrastructure, it is well-positioned to attract short-term visitors from within the Borough, Nottingham, nearby towns, and the wider East Midlands region. Whilst visitor spend can vary, there is an opportunity to generate secondary spend through enhanced visitor amenities and an improved hospitality offer.

There is a lack of significant overnight accommodation, meaning most visitors currently come for the day. Many people pass through Gedling en route to Nottingham, Sherwood Forest, or other regional attractions – giving them a reason to stop and explore is key. By improving the visitor experience through enhanced visitor amenities, Gedling can encourage higher spending per visitor.

Day Trippers are often looking for affordable, accessible activities such as parks, play areas, and family-friendly attractions, and are interested in events, outdoor spaces, and interactive experiences. People from Gedling and surrounding areas are likely to look for weekend leisure, cafés, restaurants, and retail experiences. By targeting day-trippers and local visitors, Gedling can increase footfall, visitor spending, and its reputation as a go-to destination for leisure, culture, and outdoor experiences – all while working towards long-term tourism growth and accommodation development.

Gedling is well-connected via bus services and road networks, making it an easy day-trip option for people

from Nottingham, Mansfield, Ashfield and beyond. Collaborating with neighbouring areas to offer multi-location itineraries could also increase time spent in the area.

The cost of attracting overseas visitors is expensive and this is why we will focus on attracting the domestic market to Nottinghamshire.

## 7.2 Outdoor Adventurers

Targeting outdoor and adventure visitors is a natural fit for Gedling due to its strong network of parks, trails, and reservoirs. The demand for accessible, nature-based activities has grown significantly, especially after the pandemic, as more people prioritise health, well-being, and outdoor recreation. This group are most likely to be attracted by walking, cycling, and nature-based activities such as trails and country parks, and will prefer eco-friendly, sustainable tourism experiences.

Gedling is well-positioned to attract this market because of its network of Country Parks that offer extensive walking, running, and cycling trails with scenic views. Located near Nottingham and connected via public transport, cycle routes, and roads, Gedling convenient for visitors looking for short outdoor getaways. There is potential for improved cycling and walking infrastructure to encourage more visitors from surrounding areas. Collaborating with neighbouring districts and assets - including Sherwood Forest - could create multi-day walking, cycling, or adventure tourism routes that attract both casual and experienced outdoor enthusiasts.

## 7.3 Heritage and Culture Enthusiasts

Gedling has a rich historical and cultural heritage that provides a strong foundation for attracting heritage and culture visitors. These visitors are drawn to destinations with historical significance, architectural landmarks, literary connections, and immersive cultural experiences. Heritage and cultural visitors tend to stay longer and spend more than typical day trippers, whilst interest in family-friendly, interactive heritage experiences is growing, especially for school trips and educational tourism.

Focusing on this market is a strategic opportunity because of its unique historical and literary connections – from Lord Byron to Thomas Hawksley

– and its place in Nottinghamshire’s wider heritage offer.

Gedling can link its attractions with Nottinghamshire’s other historic sites, creating a more extensive visitor offer featuring multi-site experiences.

Expanding heritage-focused events, literary festivals, and historic reenactments would strengthen Gedling’s appeal.

## 7.4 Overnight Visitors

Targeting overnight visitors is essential for Gedling to increase visitor spend, improve the local economy, and extend the impact of tourism beyond just day trips. Whilst staying visitors account for just 8% of all visitors, the same group is responsible for 23% of the overall Economic Impact. Overnight visitors tend to spend significantly more than day visitors because they contribute to accommodation, food, entertainment, and shopping.

Gedling will need to develop a range of strong heritage, outdoor, and cultural tourism attractions which can be packaged into multi-day experiences. Gedling can also act as a base for visitors exploring Nottingham and the surrounding areas. Major events in Nottinghamshire and Sherwood Forest (e.g., festivals, sporting events, and concerts) bring large crowds who may seek quieter, affordable overnight stays outside the city. Similarly, those visiting for work purposes in the Nottingham area – from corporate groups to contractors – might be drawn to well-connected, but more affordable accommodation in Gedling than the city centre. At present, Gedling lacks accommodation, meaning visitors come and go quickly

However, there were just 239,900 overnight visitors to Gedling in 2023. Whilst an increase in overnight stays is important, it should be seen as a long-term goal, with any significant increase unlikely to occur within the timescale of the Destination Management Plan. The plan instead considers the first actions needed to develop a stronger visitor product alongside a comprehensive marketing strategy to support an eventual increase in overnight stays.

businesses and stakeholders work together, recognise the part they play within it and understand the actions they need to take to move forwards.

The plan therefore aligns with the East Midlands County Combined Authority’s (EMCCA) recognition of the opportunity to amplify local efforts as part of a regional offer.

Across the work of Government there are a number of key principles that have been adopted to ensure that activities meet national and regional outcomes. Meeting these outcomes will assist in securing external funding to deliver elements of this Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan. Stakeholder consultation also revealed a range of activities that have a more local impact and should also be delivered.

## 8.0 Themes

### 8.1 Strategic Alignment

The Destination Management Plan considers Gedling in the wider context of Nottinghamshire, and the East Midlands as a desirable destination for employment, leisure, culture and learning, environmental appreciation, historical exploration, community connection and sustainable economic growth.




It has been informed by and is aligned with the priorities of both EMCCA and Nottinghamshire County Council. With reference to Nottinghamshire County Council’s Visitor Economy Framework, it very much is a case of ‘the sum is greater than the parts’ and the sector functions at its best when all

### 8.2 Themes

We will achieve our vision by focussing on eight themes, underpinned by two cross-cutting principles:



Over the page we have demonstrates how the Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan aligns with the priorities and ambitions identified by East Midlands County Combined Authority and Nottinghamshire County Council.

EMCCA Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) – Core Priorities	Nottinghamshire Visitor Economy Framework (2022) – Key Priorities	Gedling Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan - Themes	
	<p><b>Promoting our place and products</b> to deliver enhanced profile, greater reach and more visitors.</p>	<p><b>Invest in Promotion</b></p> <p>Establish Nottinghamshire as a globally recognisable brand centred on its key themes, such as Robin Hood, Sherwood Forest, and local heritage.</p>	<p><b>Data and Intelligence</b></p> <p>Better understand Gedling's visitor economy to enable evidence-based decision making.</p> <p><b>Place Marketing</b></p> <p>Showcase the borough's key assets and hidden heritage through improved place marketing.</p>
	<p><b>Developing the offer,</b> working with our stakeholders to improve and increase, for example, hotel accommodation and live venue, conference facilities.</p>	<p><b>Invest in Product</b></p> <p>Encourage innovation in tourism offerings, focusing on experiences that appeal to domestic and international visitors.</p> <p><b>Invest in Place</b></p> <p>Build sustainable infrastructure, including transport links and accessible facilities, to improve visitor experiences.</p>	<p><b>Heritage</b></p> <p>Leverage the borough's 'hidden heritage' as core to the visitor experience.</p> <p><b>Green and Open Spaces</b></p> <p>Promote and enhance green and open spaces for recreational and sustainable tourism.</p> <p><b>Visitor Product</b></p> <p>Redevelop and renew the visitor product including supporting amenities and connectivity between key assets.</p> <p><b>Leisure and Culture</b></p> <p>Enhance culture and leisure provision and the connectivity between assets.</p> <p><b>Town Centres</b></p> <p>Transition town centres from traditional retail hubs to experience and service-oriented spaces.</p>
	<p>By realising the value of the sector, showing the <b>wider benefits</b> to our region over and above the contribution to our economy.</p>	<p><b>Invest in People</b></p> <p>Empower residents to engage with and thrive in the visitor economy through skills development and employment opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Skills</b></p> <p>Create opportunities for skills development in the visitor economy.</p>

## 9.0 The Plan – Themes and Actions

The Visitor Economy Destination Management Plan centres around the following overarching vision:

*Through enhanced place marketing, cultural investment, and improved connectivity, Gedling will transition from a place people pass through to a place they choose to explore, stay, and enjoy. By leveraging its hidden heritage, revitalising leisure and tourism infrastructure, and by taking advantage of its rich natural assets, Gedling will become a sustainable visitor destination, and a key part of Nottinghamshire’s visitor offer.*

To deliver this, eight priority themes have been developed in collaboration with Gedling Borough Council and stakeholders.

These are:

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

Under each theme, a number of actions are identified. Actions have been prioritised based on their deliverability over the next 5 years and beyond. Some actions have been identified as likely to be delivered beyond the period of this plan but have been identified as actions that can be worked towards.

This action plan provides a roadmap of the first steps for Gedling to take to develop its visitor economy. The next 5 years are an opportunity to put the foundations in place to create a thriving destination for residents and visitors alike.

Key	Priority
	Short-term (1 to 2 years)
	Medium-term (3 to 4 years)
	Long-term (4 years +)

Deliverability of the Action Plan will be reliant on sufficient internal resource provided by Gedling Borough Council. While Gedling Borough Council is the lead in the development and overarching delivery of this Plan, to achieve real success, the actions will require delivery from several stakeholders from across the destination. Opportunities to secure external funding to support the creation of a Visitor Economy Officer role within Gedling Borough Council should be examined.

### 9.1 Theme 1: Data and Intelligence

This priority area is about providing a foundation for evidence-based decision making for both Gedling Borough Council and industry stakeholders. This will help us to truly understand the value of Gedling’s visitor economy, its real time performance and its long-term trajectory. We will better understand the motivations and perceptions of Gedling’s visitors, and importantly the perceptions of non-visitors and the barriers that are preventing them from choosing Gedling for their next day trip or longer stay.

Action	Priority
Undertake an audit of current data available across Gedling from multiple data sources and organisations.	
Develop a toolkit to consistently measure the economic, social and environmental impact of events to guide decision making.	
Undertake regular (every 3-5 years) perception and visitor surveys identifying motivations and barriers to visiting, visitor journey mapping etc.	

## 9.2 Theme 2: Place Marketing

A core element of the visitor economy is the promotion of place and products to deliver an enhanced profile, greater reach and more visitors. Gedling lacks a strong standalone identity as a visitor destination but there is an opportunity to develop identities around different themes that will draw people to the borough. Whilst there are already a wide range of events throughout the year these are not necessarily co-ordinated, promoted and integrated to best effect. A more coordinated approach to promoting cultural and historical assets could help reinforce local identity and attract more visitors.

Action	Priority
Develop and implement a Gedling Place Marketing Strategy – including a digital marketing campaign - that promotes the borough’s key assets, including Gedling Country Park, Bonington Theatre, Netherfield Lagoons, and local heritage sites.	High
Develop themed visitor itineraries (e.g., heritage trails, outdoor adventure routes, market town experiences) to better connect attractions with pub, restaurants, and the wider hospitality offer to increase dwell time.	Medium
Improve signage and wayfinding across the borough to better direct visitors to key sites, including historical plaques, interpretation boards, and digital trails (QR codes, AR experiences, mobile apps).	Low

## 9.3 Theme 3: Visitor Product

Gedling will benefit from addressing gaps to improve the quality and breadth of the visitor offer, including in hospitality, leisure, entertainment and accommodation options to encourage longer stays. The priority is to understand the product offer and identifying the gaps that need addressing in order to inform further development and investment.

A limited visitor product hinders the potential for extended stays, which could otherwise boost the local visitor economy.

Alongside the place marketing activity to raise awareness off the existing offer, there is an opportunity for Gedling to develop and invest in the visitor product, including more entertainment, hospitality, and leisure options; the promotion of more independent retailers, food and beverage outlets, and experiential businesses, could help to mitigate the declining footfall so closely linked to traditional retail town centre offers.

There is also an opportunity to enhance the connectivity between key visitor assets and to explore connectivity between green spaces, town centres, leisure destinations and visitor attractions, including sustainable travel and active travel options.

Action	Priority
Develop a Product Development Strategy which identifies product themes/experiences, development needs and investment priorities an action plan under each product theme.	High
Advocate for the needs of the visitor economy in the development and delivery of wider transport strategies.	High
Increase awareness for visitors and businesses/ employees/residents of public transport offer.	High
Progress the Carlton Active replacement leisure centre programme on the site of the former Richard Herrod Centre.	Medium
Feasibility study into the replacement of Arnold Leisure Centre with a new build facility.	Low
Create portfolio of potential sites for serviced and non-serviced accommodation and promote to developers.	Low
Work with transport providers to improve bus links to major visitor destinations such as Papplewick Pumping Station and Newstead Abbey.	High
Enhance active travel infrastructure, such as cycle lanes, pedestrian-friendly town centres, and new greenway connections between parks, trails and key visitor assets.	High

appeal, feeding into the Visitor Economy Destination Plan.

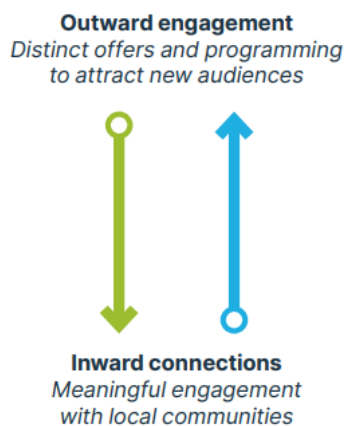
## 9.4 Theme 4: Heritage

Industrial and innovative heritage is a foundation for inclusive, sustainable development. Heritage – including literary figures, medieval sites, and industrial innovation – is core to the visitor experience.

Whilst there is a lot of heritage related activity taking place within Gedling, as well as a range of key heritage assets with regional and international importance, heritage assets are underutilised and lack investment compared to other areas, limiting their impact on tourism and community identity.

There are opportunities to leverage the ‘hidden’ heritage offer and this is being explored through a new Gedling Heritage Strategy, which specifically works to inform the Visitor Economy Destination Plan to synergise tourism and the economic opportunities that heritage assets bring.

As part of the heritage strategy a suite of opportunities have been identified to build on the desired outcomes for heritage engagement; these projects reflect the two strands for heritage:



The strategies will work together in the following ways:

- Thriving heritage assets become key attractions in the visitor economy, helping to shape tourism experiences, attract visitors and support hospitality, events and cultural industries.
- Heritage-led tourism (e.g. historic sites, museums, festivals) enhance a destination's

- Economic growth enables reinvestment in heritage conservation and heritage projects, ensuring long-term sustainability of historic assets.
- Investment in infrastructure increases access and benefits both heritage sites and tourism services.
- A thriving economy attracting funding and partnerships for heritage-led regeneration project, reinforcing local identity and community pride.

## 9.5 Theme 5: Green and Open Spaces

Gedling's parks, nature reserves, and country parks are significant assets that can be further utilised to enhance the desirability of Gedling as a place to visit.

Whilst parks and open spaces contribute significantly to Gedling's sense of place and environmental quality, more needs to be done to determine how they can contribute to the visitor economy via recreational and sustainable tourism. There are opportunities to better promote Gedling's green spaces and natural landscapes as part of an eco-tourism offer, and underutilised assets as well as opportunities for further investment in green infrastructure, including enhanced trails, walking and cycling infrastructure, and visitor facilities. There is also an opportunity to better link and connect the Borough's blue and green infrastructure with its heritage and visitor assets with improved active travel routes.

Action	Priority
Marketing the borough as an eco-tourism destination by promoting trails, green corridors, country parks and environmentally friendly visitor facilities.	
Provide resources such as maps, guided tours, and apps that highlight eco-friendly routes and points of interest.	
Improve parks and open spaces to make them more accessible and welcoming.	
Pursue opportunities to improve Blue-Green Infrastructure across the borough to ensure green spaces are good quality, safe and accessible.	

## 9.6 Theme 6: Leisure and Culture

Leisure and culture facilities are a strategically important element of the visitor economy offer to Gedling’s communities and visitors alike. A need to enhance the current cultural offer as well as leisure centre provision operated by the Council has been identified, including new facilities for both the Arnold and Carlton areas that not only protects the current level of indoor facility and cultural provision but also provides enhanced facilities to meet the future demand for health and wellbeing activities.

Action	Priority
Continue to leverage external funding to develop parks and play areas.	Medium
Introduce energy-efficient lighting, heating, and water-saving measures in leisure centres to reduce environmental impact.	Medium
Redevelop Arnold’s leisure, library, and theatre facilities into a vibrant community hub.	High
Redevelop Carlton Forum Leisure Centre.	Low
Develop a business case for the Bonington Theatre expansion, including additional cinema screens and an enhanced programme of performances and events.	High

## 9.7 Theme 7: Town Centres

Once reliant on retail, increasing vacancy rates are testament to a need for a diversification of town centres as vibrant, mixed-use destinations attractive to residents and visitors along with a strong day to evening economy. Town centres will need to develop a more experiential offer, hosting pop-up shows, regular events and cultural activities to increase footfall and engagement.

Public realm improvements, pedestrianisation, better integration of green spaces and an enhanced sense of arrival can enhance the appeal and make town centres more attractive to visitors and encourage people to spend more time there.

Action	Priority
Enhance the new Arnold Market, increasing local produce, artisan goods, and themed markets (e.g., food festivals, seasonal fairs).	Low
Expand the annual events calendar with food festivals, live music, theatre performances, and heritage celebrations to attract visitors year-round.	Medium
Support community groups and the third sector to improve town centre buildings via capital grants.	Low
Support existing businesses to grow through business support initiatives and grant funding.	Low
Expand pop-up retail and independent business spaces in vacant shops to increase variety and local enterprise.	Medium
Work with landlords and property owners to reduce vacancy rates and improve the appearance of high streets through shopfront improvement schemes and grants.	Medium
Implement the Ambition Arnold Masterplan, focusing on public realm improvements, shopfront refurbishments, and mixed-use development.	High

## 9.8 Theme 8: Skills

As Gedling strengthens its visitor economy, demand for hospitality, tourism, leisure and entertainment workers will grow. There is an opportunity to create a sustainable pathway for retaining and attracting skills while supporting SMEs to drive economic growth in the visitor economy. The community and voluntary sector is the foundation for much of the leisure and heritage activity delivered in Gedling.

These projects in particular could be used to provide opportunities for volunteers, including young people and diverse communities, to engage in sports teams, conservation, and tourism.

## 9.10 Cross Cutting Principle 2: Partnerships and Collaboration

Each theme is reliant on partnerships and collaboration. There is an ambition across the region for boroughs to work with each other and the surrounding region to position Gedling as part of a broader Nottinghamshire visitor offer, and the county as a multi-day visitor destination.

Gedling can work with neighbouring councils to develop joint marketing campaigns, visitor packages and itineraries. More broadly, the devolution afforded to EMCCA should facilitate greater regional collaboration on cross-border initiatives, such as transport infrastructure, cycling routes and tourism promotion, will strengthen the region as a whole.

By working collaboratively and creating a strong partnership across the Combined Authority, partners can offer efficiency of scale and growth for businesses, amplifying key assets across national and international markets.

Action	Priority
Develop partnerships with Visit Nottinghamshire, cultural institutions, visitor attractions, and hospitality businesses to co-create visitor experiences and to create bundled offers and joint ticketing schemes.	
Invest to build capacity and support the role of the voluntary and community sector in managing heritage and leisure assets and delivering activities that contribute to the visitor economy.	

### 9.11 Working in Partnership

The Action Plan, where appropriate, considers the likely capacity and resources available when identifying the likely partners to take forward the actions.

A collaborative approach that engages effectively our partners and stakeholders, including businesses from the tourism and hospitality sector, in the development and marketing of our destinations is essential to sustained progress.

Action	Priority
Consult with businesses in the visitor economy to understand recruitment skills challenges.	
Expand relationship with Inspire and Futures to lever in external funding, increasing the number of activities and opportunities available.	
Partner with existing volunteering organisations to help maximise the destination's volunteer base by creating a volunteer programme to engage local people in heritage conservation, park maintenance, and event delivery.	
Collaborate with local training providers to strengthen links with Gedling businesses and deliver co-funded, targeted interventions, work experience and apprenticeships around hospitality, tourism, heritage management, and digital marketing.	

## 9.9 Cross Cutting Principle 1: Accessibility and Inclusivity

As part of the UK's Tourism Sector Deal, the government has stated its ambition to become the most accessible tourism destination in Europe by 2025, aiming to significantly increase the number of international disabled visitors by a third through initiatives focused on improving accessibility across the country. Gedling will need to maintain alignment with national and local tourism priorities to ensure that leisure and tourism is inclusive and accessible to all people across the borough. Tourism assets should be available and enjoyable for everyone, including individuals with disabilities and those with limited mobility.

Action	Priority
Conduct an accessibility audit of key visitor attractions, identifying areas for improvement, including step-free access, signage, sensory-friendly spaces, and accessible transport links.	
Work with owners and operators of key historic assets to explore improvements to accessibility to the Borough's main historic assets.	

Whilst Gedling Borough Council can operate with its own assets and resources to achieve some growth, it can affect far greater change by also using its position and influence as a facilitator.

This document has been created in consultation with key partners and that collaboration underpins the entire framework.

It is essential that the Destination Management Plan remains realistic given the limited resources and existing capacity challenges. Setting achievable goals based on a clear understanding of available resources is key. Initiatives such as creating networks for local businesses and attractions to collaborate, for example, require minimal financial investment but can yield significant benefits in fostering cohesion and shared purpose.

Wider partners and stakeholders will also be engaged to develop the visitor offer. For example, Visit Nottinghamshire will be crucial to any regional marketing efforts, and EMCCA – with devolved responsibilities around transport – should be involved to coordinate wider transport and connectivity ambitions across the area.

The Community and Voluntary Sector, so integral to much of the leisure and heritage activity delivered in Gedling, will play a key role in engaging residents and visitors alike with the visitor offer as it develops.

**The Destination Management Plan will likely require buy-in from the following key stakeholders:**

Organisation	Role
Gedling Borough Council	To oversee place marketing strategy; facilitate partnership working; manage the portfolio of leisure and recreation services and tourism projects already under its control; and to source funding for the initiatives identified.
EMCCA	In developing a regional approach to the visitor economy, EMCCA are building a unified approach to attract more visitors, and create new opportunities for local businesses, visitors, and residents. EMCCA will be an important partner for promotional activities, whilst spending and delivery in areas such as transport and skills can improve transport connectivity and help to develop a skilled workforce.
Nottinghamshire County Council	The role of the county council is one of facilitator and collaborator around a Visitor Economy Framework that sits in alignment with the ambitions for Gedling. It provides services and infrastructure. The main jurisdiction is within the county, however the council works closely with partners because the Visitor Economy is not restricted by local authority boundaries. <b>Bestwood Country Park</b> is jointly owned by Gedling Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council.
Nottingham City Council	The role of the City Council is similar to that of the county council but with its main jurisdiction is within the city boundary. The City Council has a good relationship with Visit Nottinghamshire and other partners and is a keen supporter of the Visitor Economy. <b>Newstead Abbey</b> is now publicly owned by Nottingham City Council.
Visit Nottinghamshire	Visit Nottinghamshire is the main regional tourism organisation providing marketing and support to its members and partners. Visit Nottinghamshire has a close working relationship with other tourism organisations in neighbouring counties and with Visit England.
Visit England/Visit Britain	The national tourism agency – a non-Governmental public body funded by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). VisitBritain/VisitEngland plays a role in building England’s tourism product and raising Britain’s profile worldwide.

<b>District and Borough Councils</b>	There are seven District and Borough Councils within Nottinghamshire that work closely with the County Council. Most of these provide a variety of services for the Visitor Economy including leisure and recreation services and tourism projects and networks.
<b>Private Sector</b>	To provide the Visitor Economy product or service that makes up an excellent visit or stay in Gedling. Businesses are encouraged to join up where appropriate. Independently owned shops, museums, and other amenities are all key to promoting Gedling's visitor economy.
<b>Suppliers</b>	To supply the Visitor Economy sector with high quality and sustainable products and services.
<b>Education - schools, colleges, universities</b>	Schools, colleges and universities will play an important role in developing the skills and qualifications necessary to help people thrive in the visitor economy sector.
<b>Third sector - charities, non-profit, volunteer groups</b>	Some areas within the Visitor Economy rely heavily on the third sector, for example, some heritage sites and museums are entirely volunteer run. These organisations add social value and an improved product.

This list of stakeholders is not designed to be exhaustive; successfully delivering this Destination Management Plan depends on our ability to work together with a variety of stakeholders to be identified for each action when appropriate.



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## Appendix A

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### Gedling Visitor Economy Audit





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## Appendix B

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### Consultation Main Findings





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## Appendix C

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### Consultation Survey Analysis





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## Appendix D

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### Strategic Alignment

