



CALDERDALE VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY



2019-2024



VISION 2024

#VISIONCDALE2024





[WWW.VISITCALDERDALE.COM](http://www.visitcalderdale.com)



INTRODUCTION

In line with Vision 2024, Calderdale is realising its ambition as a must see destination. A place that offers something unusual, locally distinct, a creative vibe that transcends valley wide in our towns, villages and countryside. A place that demonstrates resilience and reinvention but most importantly, kindness and inclusivity.

For our visitors, Calderdale offers much to enjoy; varied attractions, independent accommodation, a fast growing, bespoke cultural and festival offer and ever changing retail, cafés and restaurants, all across our six market towns. Underpinned and overseen by the dramatic landscape of our uplands and steep valleys - echoing the sounds of industrial evolution and revolution.

There is no doubt that our destination offer is strong, but in a changing world, the tourism industry cannot stand still and in Calderdale there is no room for complacency. As visitor tastes change, the market place for leisure time and spend becomes increasingly competitive. Technological advancements are starting to make a profound difference in a way that destinations are researched, experienced and showcased by our consumers.

The importance of the visitor economy is understood within Calderdale and the wider region. The value of tourism is now worth £8 billion to the Yorkshire economy, an increase of 14% since 2011; demonstrating the industry has proved resilient throughout the economic downturn. As a nation there are strategic campaigns that are attracting and engaging European visitors from Germany, France and Holland. Yorkshire's great outdoors offer concentrates on walking and cycling in areas such as North York Moors. Calderdale can and will capitalise on this through engaging with strategic campaigns from Visit England and Welcome to Yorkshire which will help us to attract the international leisure cycling market and walkers wishing to explore high profile strategic routes such as the Pennine Way.

In 2024 the borough of Calderdale marks a significant 50 year anniversary and in readiness we are working with creative and inspiring businesses, communities and ambassadors to realise a progressive vision; re-energising Calderdale as an enterprising, talented, resilient and kind place to live, work and visit.

As a visitor destination this means we will continue to harness and showcase what we do well, whether this is our grass roots cultural offer through the free to join festivals that celebrate our quirky heritage such as Handmade Parade and Lamplighter Festival in Hebden Bridge and Todmorden; or the reimagined beauty of The Piece Hall in Halifax that rivals any Italian piazza. Our adrenalin gateway, whether this be the magnificent mountain bike terrain and road cycling the area affords, or the largest urban climbing

wall in the UK that dominates the Brighouse skyline. 2019 and beyond sees more attention on our area with the highly anticipated period drama Gentleman Jack, celebrating the life and loves of Anne Lister, an ambitious, progressive woman who was not afraid to push boundaries. Calderdale must seize this opportunity to promote and appeal to new audiences; celebrating our LGBT friendly communities and our fantastic pride festivals; we must promote this as a reason to come to the area.



Stoodley Pike



Rokt

These are exciting times for Calderdale. The new Visitor Economy Strategy will be an integral part to developing the next chapter as the 'must experience' visitor destination. It will also embed the principles to grow the economy, reduce inequalities and build a sustainable future and to be the best Local Authority borough in the North.

A new statement of intent is necessary to embrace changes and develop as a destination in order to continue to offer our existing and new visitors a compelling reason to visit. But importantly that our local audiences feel a part of and engage in our fantastic offer; as a destination, we are fortunate to have a wealth of activity that resonates across the various demographics and allows local people to be a tourist in their own town. The new strategy must build on this and ensure we promote well, our free to attend festivals, not only to visitors but those locally who may not always have been afforded the opportunity to engage. We must create new opportunities for tourism in our diverse communities; celebrating the wealth of different cultures across Calderdale; for example building on the FLY festival above Mixenden.

Calderdale has a strong distinctive identity, one which locals are proud to talk about and visitors keen to hear the story. Place brands come and go but success is built on solid foundations. Visitors engage with our statements that Calderdale is 'modestly magnificent' after experiencing our powerful industrial heritage and want to get 'happily lost' in the dramatic countryside surrounding the locally distinct towns and villages.

Social media has given the consumer the power to tell our story and also challenge what we do. Yet we are confident that Calderdale is not just a place it is an attitude; one that comes from our distinct market towns with a fierce pride of place with things that need to be there, not just things to see.

A destination supported by more than 85% SME businesses, many of which are creative; showing **resilience, enterprise** and **talent**. A destination where festivals are at the heart of our market towns, harnessed and grown at grass roots level, celebrating **kindness** and **creativity**.

Handmade Parade



“ The creative industries are the fastest growing sector of the UK economy. We have the legacy, the talent and the opportunity to do more, and to use culture to unite communities, encourage investment and accelerate economic growth ”

Dame Jayne-Anne Gadhia
CEO Virgin Money UK

As a destination management organisation we must continue to find unique ways to collate and tell our story. Globally there are more than 500 tourism regions and over 105,000 towns and cities competing for attention. We will rethink and develop our experience driven offer to engage and thrive, attracting regional, national and international markets.

The five year plan draws on existing strengths, strong partnerships and opportunities to grow. The forward look will concentrate on supporting places, people and businesses:

- Celebrating and developing our visitor economy businesses and attractions
- Growing and nurturing new skills and talent in the cultural tourism industry
- Ensure inclusivity for visitors and locals and celebrating new and emerging tourism trends
- Telling our story creatively and maximising awareness of and access to our offer.



Bankfield Museum

THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LANDSCAPE FOR OUR VISITOR ECONOMY

In an ever changing economic landscape with uncertainty nationally and internationally, seemingly the visitor economy could be the strand that supports future resilience across the UK.

Since 2010, tourism has been the fastest growing industry for job creation in the UK and is forecast to have an industry worth more than £257 billion by 2025 (source Visit Britain 2018). Throughout 2017 39.2 million people visited generating £24.5 billion to the economy giving the UK a global ranking of seventh in relation to tourism earnings. Despite the positive statistics, the industry still faces challenges; visitor numbers to the UK in April, May and June 2018 were down compared with the same period of the previous year and there has been a reduction in spending. (Which is echoed through more local research identifying the staycation market is spending less).

Staycation (holiday makers from the UK staying overnight) More than one third of UK residents chose to holiday at home in 2017. This is as a result of more experience driven, year round weather resilient activities available and a desire from experience seekers and the family market to learn something new; affordability because of the weaker pound and time limited breaks with more frequent short breaks taking the place of longer more traditional holidays.

As a destination, Yorkshire is within the top five places to visit (20%), alongside London, Wales, Scotland and the South West of England.

Inbound tourism (internationals visiting the UK) is also healthy. 2017 figures show that visitors to the UK from North America have decreased by 5.4% (weaker dollar) but European Union visitors are up by 3.5% (stronger euro). International visitor spend in the UK is up by 7.7%. London remains the dominant location but other areas of the UK are now starting to see a rise in international attention and 17% are visiting Yorkshire. (Barclays 2017 research sample size 7,000).

International perceptions of the UK are changing with many using statements such as 'educational' 'fascinating', 'exciting', 'romantic' and 'relaxing' to describe the UK offer. As little as three years ago, an international perception study carried out by VisitBritain identified the international market thought the north of England had little to attract and engage. This is changing with strategic campaigns delivered by VisitBritain; 'Great Britain' and 'Discover England' are enticing more international leisure visitors working alongside the travel trade with a concentration on itinerary building to change hearts and minds.

We continue to work with Welcome to Yorkshire to celebrate the beauty of Yorkshire internationally with a concentration on promoting the region as a now established international cycling destination. However we will not forget the special location in which we sit, within the South Pennines; using our location and connections such as Pennine Prospects to secure more visitors to the area from Greater Manchester and Lancashire; promoting our excellent rail links from east to west and north to south, to encourage more to celebrate our landscape.

Our Ambition is reaping rewards

Locally our towns & villages and attractions within are gaining international attention. The Piece Hall transformation now provides an independent retail and iconic cultural venue for audiences of up to 7,000. Internationally created digital exhibitions at Eureka! have broadened the national children's museums appeal. The digiPlaySpace exhibition showcased in Eureka!, the exhibition's first ever visit to Europe from the Toronto International Film Festival. Grass roots festivals continue to grow and appeal to international markets.

Handmade Parade is proud to base itself in Calderdale and connects professional artists, giant puppet makers, street bands and performers with communities to create stunning events. Breath taking locations from rugged landscapes to magnificent period properties, Calderdale offers a wealth of locations for any film or TV series. Hosting a back drop to iconic screen classics including 'A Boy, A Girl and a Bike' to more recent gritty dramas such as 'Happy Valley' and 'Ackley Bridge'; Calderdale is becoming the go to location.



OUR VISITOR ECONOMY - TYPES OF VISITOR AND IMPACT ON OUR ECONOMY

Sample Size	367	Within 1 hour drive	Beyond 1 hour drive	Average party size	Average length of stay	Hotel or Self Catering	Friends & Family	Would recommend
True Visitors	353 (14 local)							
Day Trippers	223	130	93	3.5				100%
Total overnight stays	144			2	3 nights	71	73	100%
Staycation Visitors	125	14	111					
International Visitors USA - 4 Canada - 5 Australia - 4 Ireland - 2	19							

Reason for Visit

Culture and events	Visiting friends and relatives	Food and hospitality	Great outdoors/ walking and cycling	History and heritage	Shopping	% engaged in more than one activity
50%	32%	18%	44%	27%	35%	82%

Local intelligence (Cambridge Report 2017) tells us that the visitor economy in Calderdale is strong, resilient and most importantly growing.

Recent trends for Calderdale show an overall increase in year on year tourism spending and visitor numbers which has been driven by day trips and international visitors. We know that there has been an upward trend in the visitor economy in Calderdale since 2010.

Overall, more than 300,000 staying trips were spent in Calderdale in 2017, slightly less than the previous year, but with an increase of international visitor numbers and an upward trend in spend, this has created an overall increase in the staycation market of 6%. It is estimated that 240,000 trips were made by domestic visitors and 58,000 were made by overseas visitors. Staying trips resulted in an estimated 1 million visitor nights spent in Calderdale equating to £68.7 million in overnight spend.

Approximately 6.4 million tourism day trips were made to the District in 2017 and increase by 1% from the previous year.

Total expenditure by visitors which combines overnight and day trips to Calderdale is estimated to have been in the region of £266.4 million in 2017, an increase of 5% from the previous year.

With multiplier effects, the worth of the visitor economy in 2017 is estimated to be **£344.1 million**, proving that we have a resilient and growing sector.

Tourism supports just under 5,000 FTE jobs in Calderdale, totalling 7,684 actual jobs and currently accounting for 7% of all jobs within the Borough of Calderdale.

Visitor Information

(Local research from June/October & November 2018 Halifax and Hebden Bridge Visitor Centres)

The above echoes the national trend showing that there is a strong day visitor market. Many visitors are travelling to Calderdale from across the sub region. Leeds, Bradford, Harrogate, Whitby and Scarborough are all dominant starting points for visitors and shows that the area is attracting visitors from beyond the hour drive time. Visitors from Manchester, Stockport and Liverpool continue to enjoy the offer of Calderdale.

Overnight visitors are coming from throughout the UK with a concentration from Scotland the east coast and London with a good number staying in paid for accommodation as opposed to visiting friends and relatives. Suggesting those from further afield is likely to be influenced by good digital marketing, high profile PR and film and TV.

Our international visitors are often visiting friends and relatives and frequently touring Europe. Party size is dictated by averages. From carrying out research at different points of the year the average party size for visitors varies with the dominant visitor party size of 3.5 visitors in the summer to two in the autumn winter. This could suggest an increased family market in the warmer months and uplift in interest from the couples market towards the autumn and winter.

Of those visitors questioned, all commented they would repeat visit. As a destination, we have a good, strong offer and a reason to come back. Visitors comment that they have a strong identity with Calderdale as part of Yorkshire, the landscape, heritage and the cultural offer.

Calderdale's tourist attractions are getting bigger and better!

Photo credit: Bruce Fitzgerald



The Piece Hall

The Piece Hall hit the 2 million visitor mark in summer 2018 on the anniversary of its reopening. Visitors keen to experience the independent retail, food and drink and creative events programme. Throughout 2019 more than 125 days of events are programmed and expected to attract 440,000 visitors to a combination of ticketed and free events.

Eureka! Has welcomed huge audiences - in the region of 300,000 for two consecutive years from 2017 and 2018 - proving that developing the product through digiPlaySpace to engage the 11-13 age range is working and the attraction has broad appeal to the family market.

ROKT continues to develop the urban adrenalin offer, including more escape rooms appealing to the adult leisure market and a nerf centre for younger children. As a result the attractions have seen an increase in visitors from 27,800 in 2017 to 32,500 in 2018. ROKTface from its launch in 2017 to 2018 saw more than 1,500 climbers attempt the highest outdoor manmade climbing wall in the UK.

Photo credit: Calderdale Museums



Shibden Hall

Calderdale Museums visits have increased from just fewer than 145,000 visitors in 2017 to more than 164,000 visitors in 2018. Significant increase in visitor numbers has been seen at Shibden Hall and Heptonstall museums.

The Victoria Theatre received just over 75,000 visitors throughout 2017 and saw a significant increase in 2018 with more than 105,000 visitors through the door. This is largely because of more ambitious programming and high quality profile 'sell out' performances with a concentration on music.

Visitor attractions across Calderdale are responsive to the consumer, they understand the market changes and are ambitious enough to develop and diversify to capture the market, creating not only a vibrant offer but show resilience to stand the test of time in a highly competitive environment. We want to build on this and make use of our own heritage assets through Venue Calderdale; including Shibden Hall and Clay House to support new opportunities including destination weddings.

Visitor economy businesses in Calderdale are full embracing of the ambition of the destination, as clear ambassadors they understand the beauty of our offer but also welcome new opportunities and change.

“ We love our corner of Yorkshire. What a place to come to work. Wind down the famous Cote de Shibden Wall (easier in a car than on a bike!) into the bottom of Shibden Valley and Halifax seems a world away. Even though the excitement of our TDY day of glory has passed we still see many keen amateur cyclists bravely tackling this epic challenge. For those wanting a slower pace there are many lovely walks around here and a wealth of gritty history to be discovered. Follow the ancient bridleways and flagged footpaths from the Inn and you are walking in the footsteps of our new heroine, Anne Lister. We have all gone “Gentleman Jack” mad here; it's been so exciting for us to watch the cast, many of whom have stayed here, setting off to Shibden Hall to film on location. We are sure that this BBC costume drama will be great for tourism in the area and showcase Shibden and all it has to offer. ”

Caitlin Heaton
Owner - Shibden Mill Inn

Accommodation in the area is proving resilient and showing some growth 2015-2018 shows a net increase of just below one hundred bed spaces across the Calder valley. More town centre development has taken place for larger accommodation and a steady growth of smaller accommodation in Sowerby Bridge and Hebden Bridge. More recently there has been increased interest in glamping accommodation which supports the area as an outdoor destination that attracts walkers and cyclists. This area will be a focus for development in the years to come with a particular concentration on supporting areas such as Todmorden, where there is an appetite from local businesses to develop the accommodation offer in and around the town.

The new focus for development

After engagement with Calderdale's key tourism partners, local businesses, cultural partners and visitors it is clear that the development of the new Visitor Economy Strategy in a fast changing national and international environment must be built on core principles for sustainability and growth.

Calderdale Tourism Board – representative of public, private and third sector organisations and businesses are keen to develop our offer to the **staycation market** and seize the opportunities afforded by **film and TV**, in particular the prospect of a multi season offering of **'Gentleman Jack'** and ensure we provide reasons for visitors to stay for longer and experience the full valley.

Cultural Destinations partners want to ensure marketing and promotion is well co-ordinated, with a common narrative and a true ambassadorial approach. Cultural partners understand that the development of the **night time economy** is a key factor to support resilience in Calderdale.

Local business forums and town board representatives from Hebden Bridge & Mytholmroyd, Todmorden, Brighouse, Sowerby Bridge and Halifax are keen to see **experience driven** high streets to ensure Calderdale's market towns can thrive, understanding events and festivals are key reason for visitors to our area.



South Pennines

Gentleman Jack



© Lookout Point

How we will make our visitor economy even stronger

Our brand and raising the profile of our story

Yorkshire is the brand and Calderdale is a key destination within Yorkshire. Our strength is that 'Yorkshire' as a brand and the values have a high recognition within the UK and across the international market. Good collaboration with Welcome to Yorkshire, supporting Yorkshire focussed campaigns supports us as a destination. 2019 will see the fourth Tour de Yorkshire visit Calderdale as we celebrate a start of the fourth day of racing from The Piece Hall in Halifax on Sunday 5 May.

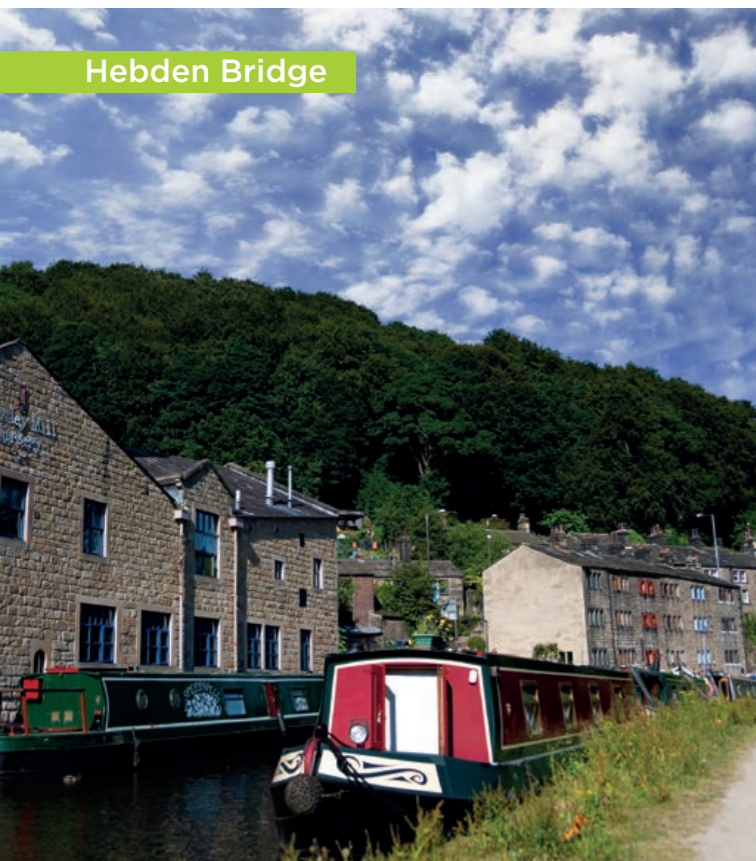
To place our destination within the Yorkshire brand means that all planning, development and marketing will naturally follow. We are fortunate to sit on the periphery of two city regions providing the opportunity to attract up to 7 million visitors from across the two city regions with the adage of good rail networks regionally and nationally to entice visitors out of their cars and into our natural landscape.

With the intention to attract more staycation visitors, more concentrated effort will be given to attracting audiences from Greater Manchester, engaging with Visit Manchester and Marketing Manchester colleagues. We will promote the strong Yorkshire brand but celebrate our location which also sits within the South Pennines, part of the 'rugged backbone' of England – which will of course grow in profile with the proposed development of a 'South Pennines Park' status and afford the opportunity to promote further the outdoors offer to visitors and locals, supporting 'Active Calderdale', utilising and promoting Calderdale's 'natural playground'.

“ A different approach to caring for our environment means creating a landscape for the future, space for all and supporting thriving local economies. ”


Pam Warhurst
Chair of Pennine Prospects & Calderdale Tourism Board

Over the last three years, Calderdale has worked hard to develop an intriguing story; the profile of Calderdale has not increased by chance, it has been achieved through developing an ambitious and creative narrative, excellent collaborative work with tourism businesses, cultural partners and people who believe and understand destination profiling. Joint marketing and PR with cultural partners over this time has secured regional, national and international recognition, the campaign has been running since 2016. From April 2018 – March 2019, Calderdale and our market towns have featured forty pieces of editorial coverage with a PR value of more than £600,000 reaching an audience of 153,000 potential visitors. Destination features have been included in more traditional press including 'The Guardian' and 'The Times' and 'Country life'. Stories have also featured heavily through digital and social media with activity features from lifestyle bloggers including 'Family Fun' and 'Tin box Traveller'.



Hebden Bridge

The pinnacle of this hard work as part of the 'Cultural Destinations' programme has been celebrated recently in the National Geographic where West Yorkshire and Calderdale feature as one of the **top 19 destinations to see in 2019**:



The Cool List 2019 - Featuring everything from futuristic cityscapes and modernist architecture to pristine rainforest and rehabilitated wildlife, we bring you the 19 destinations set to hit the headlines in 2019.

07 West Yorkshire

Sculpture culture is transforming the local landscape -

Why now? A major new sculpture triennial is set to open in the summer.

Main attractions: Elsewhere, the Calder Valley - with hippyish Hebden Bridge as its epicentre - is a burgeoning hub for restaurants and independent shops.

(Source National Geographic - Travel November 2018).

It is clear that through joint campaigns, attention is focussed on Calderdale, this has provided a catalyst for our grass roots businesses to shout about how good they are and people are listening. Moving forward, we will develop more creative digital campaigns, working with visuals and film to ensure we are ahead of the game in terms of destination marketing.

#DISTINCTIVE

Actions - Calderdale's brand must continue and develop, concentrating on our strengths and continue to:

- Position Calderdale as the gateway to Yorkshire, concentrating efforts on the staycation market and in particular those within easy distance of the South Pennines creating compelling multi-agency digital marketing campaigns
- Greater Manchester will be a key target market in which we will make known Calderdale's distinctive character
- Exploit Calderdale's modern day and historic entrepreneurship and transformation (Dean Clough, Piece Hall, Gibson Mill) celebrate and showcase the offer
- Promote our world class and 'one off' attractions
- Support the eclectic mix of independent retail and fully integrate this into the tourism offer and marketing programmes
- Support our vibrant festival programme - providing small scale cash injection to those providers who create grass roots, creative, engaging, free activity that draws visitors in and supports the wider economy
- To ensure longevity - work with groups to explore different ways of generating income, building on good practice and entrepreneurship across the sector, including Crowd Funder and corporate social responsibility from local businesses.

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GROWING OUR VISITOR ECONOMY AND SUPPORTING OUR ENTERPRISING TOURISM BUSINESSES

Careers in tourism

The visitor economy in Calderdale is strong and resilient and it accounts for 7% of all local employment which is hugely important. Yet it has been documented for several years that the tourism industry needs to create a robust plan of action to develop and retain skills in the industry, whether this is in hospitality, visitor attractions or cultural organisations. Identified by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as a priority; more work is needed nationally, regionally and locally to understand this more fully and create ways to encourage uptake in the industry, creating career paths and a reason to be a part of the industry. In order to thrive we must **develop higher level skills in a high value economy.**

Brexit potentially threatens 25,000 jobs in the holiday industry, partly because of the ending of free movement across the EU. With this in mind, we must act now to prioritise the development of skills and opportunities in the industry at a local level.

Locally there is a continued need to develop and strengthen the relationship with education providers to raise awareness of the importance of the industry and the opportunities that this offers. In order to do this properly, a multifaceted approach from the local authority, business sector, higher

educational establishments and schools is needed. Time, planning and resource must be dedicated if skills development and retention within the tourism sector is to be achieved. Led by strong, sustainable businesses, success will be measured in terms of business growth and local job creation.

Dean Clough D Mill



Year	No of jobs	Full time equivalent	% increase from previous year	Average increase
2014	5,552	4,031	+ 2%	
2015	5,965	4,348	+8%	
2016	6,371	4,633	+7%	
2017	6,884	4,990	+8%	6.25% increase

(Source Cambridge Reports 2014-2017)

Supporting our tourism businesses and attractions to grow

Elmet Farm House



Over the life of the last strategy we have worked hard to support independent tourism businesses through one to one and group support. We have already co-delivered successful training sessions on destination marketing, effective use of TripAdvisor, understanding Airbnb, White Rose Award training and Visitor Attraction Quality Assessment. Quarterly training workshops have supported 185 tourism businesses and more than 60 one to one business support sessions have been carried out. In-depth business planning to individual businesses has resulted in secured grant funding for capital development to ensure successful business start-up. The quotes below highlight how valuable our intervention has been and how important future business support is.

“ The Principal Officer for Tourism visited us at home while we were planning a new ‘Glamping’ site and, the support from her and her team was invaluable. The information provided helped us shape our offering, introduced us to new marketing opportunities and provided excellent research data to help with our bid for funding. Knowledge and approach were excellent and we have continued to receive support as the business moves through to design and planning. I had no idea that such a function existed, but it has made a material difference to our business design. ”

Angie Mossman

New business proprietor for Glamping Accommodation – Colden on receiving business planning advice to secure over £40,000 European LEADER funding

“ The success of Elmet Farmhouse, which was launched in December 2014, was greatly facilitated by the encouragement and practical assistance provided by Calderdale’s Tourism and Business Support teams. The training I have accessed through the Tourism team has proved particularly helpful in enabling me to develop my business and maximise its potential. ”

Lesley Jackson
Elmet Farm House

Luxury self-catering accommodation, Hebden Bridge – commenting on attending Airbnb and TripAdvisor training.

The South Pennines LEADER programme has realised £232,000 for businesses in Calderdale of which just under £50,000 has been allocated to tourism businesses. If all grant applications are successful throughout 2019, more than £230,000 will have been secured for rural tourism projects over the life of the funding programme.

As the offer of Calderdale develops, so does the competition for attracting visitors. Therefore we must continue to support our independent businesses with good training programmes and a concentration on commercial viability and growth, working with colleagues from Leeds Beckett, Calderdale College and local business ambassadors to ensure business resilience and growth and jobs for local residents. Now is the perfect opportunity to align job creation in the borough with the ‘Inclusive Economy Strategy’

and create opportunities for harder to reach groups, working to a clear directive and supported by time limited cash injection to make change.

Our aim should be ambitious but realistic, considering the national and international landscape in the next few years and how this may impact on the visitor economy. Starting from the current baseline and working together with others creating sector specific plans **we should aim for an increase in tourism related jobs by an average of 6.5% year on year from 2019-2024**, with a concentrated effort on full time, high quality opportunities for local employees.

We should also aim to grow the industry by £15 million per annum each year from 2019 – 2024. Based on the data below this should be achievable.

Evidence Base (Cambridge Reports 2014-2017)

Year	Tourism Industry – worth (with multiplier effect)	% increase from previous year	Average increase
2014	£276 million	+2%	
2015	£298.3 million	+8%	
2016	£328 million	+11%	
2017	£344.1 million	+5%	6.5% increase

#ENTERPRISING & TALENTED

Actions - nurturing our talent - we will:

- Establish a partnership approach to skills development with Calderdale College and Leeds Beckett, working closely with visitor economy businesses
- Support a baseline skills audit with local businesses
- Support internships through the Inclusive Economy project into tourism and cultural organisations
- Work with HE providers to assess the viability of reviving the Ambassadorship programme for local businesses
- Investigate peer to peer support within the industry
- Increase tourism jobs by 6.5% year on year
- Grow Calderdale's visitor economy by £15 million per annum.



Develop the range and accessibility of our visitor offer

As a destination with inspiring landscapes and an ambition demonstrated through our quality attractions we want to see the range of our offer growing over the next 5 years. We are fast becoming a recognised beacon for independence. A celebrated independent music offer both small and large scale whether this be at The Victoria Theatre, Hebden Bridge Trades Club, The Lantern or Grayston Unity.

There has been a move towards embedding creative use of alternative space such as the Borough Market Albany Arcade to host small events, Square Chapel's 'Other Rooms' programme that presented immersive pop-up films & plays across Halifax.

Our landscape and heritage holds great appeal for film and TV. Hardcastle Craggs providing the dramatic backdrop for 'Peterloo' and Shibden Hall set to showcase 'Gentleman Jack' in spring 2019.

As a destination we need to continue to develop our natural offer through the 'South Pennines Park' and our town or country entertainment to appeal to all incomes. We must continue to create opportunities our local demographic to engender interest and pride, as well as those further afield.

Successful growth on all levels begins and ends with the customer, we need to continue to grow, diversify and think creatively to engage new audiences and encourage repeat visits.



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#RESILIENCE

Actions - For continued success we need to:

- Tackle seasonality – work with attractions to leverage investment of out of season activity
- Extend the length of stay for leisure visitors
- Increase the direct spend to businesses of day visitors and the staycation market
- Work with partners to develop the night time economy in key towns across Calderdale – starting with Halifax (and with the support of Halifax BID), a town with a fast developing cultural offer and good collaboration
- Maintain international interest and be ready for the additional profile film and TV opportunities and developing visitor attractions will bring.



CULTURE AT THE HEART OF PLACE MAKING



Calderdale has made impressive strides to develop the cultural offer, the planning, programming and delivery has been ambitious and creative. The reimagining of the Piece Hall and expansion of Square Chapel, the evolving offer of Dean Clough and Eureka! Investment in public sector owned facilities such as the new central library; all of which have created a story of ambition and resilience that is appealing to the visitor and inward investors and inspiring to local people and businesses.

All have been underpinned by a strong, consistent collaboration of cultural partners who have worked to create shared experiences and marketed a broader product to the visitor and the local; developing a seamless and coherent offer.

In the upper valley, the distinctive festival programme is one admired by other locations and the authenticity of the offer cannot be feigned. Artists and creatives are inspired by the landscape our upper valley offers and the local people it serves.

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“ Hebdon Bridge is a truly creative landscape, filled with quirky spaces and independent shops which attract visitors of all kinds. But providing regular prompts and reasons to visit is imperative. Working with local partners Hebdon Bridge Arts Festival weaves a compelling narrative around people and place whether this be via seasonal initiatives like Festive Fandango or the summer Festival or smaller stand-alone events and specials like Open Gardens. Connecting with partners up and down the valley, we animate and spotlight our rich shared heritage and creative places. Engaging digitally is becoming an ever more important part of the story as we engineer desire lines which blend retail, culture, food and drink and outdoor activity. The conversation might start on social media and end over a coffee or craft ale. ”

Helen Mellor
Director, Hebdon Bridge Arts Festival

“ I feel that Lamplighter is not a festival that happens to Todmorden, it is a festival that is made by Todmorden, and at heart, and it's about the community celebrating itself. Without the support, pride, and love of the local community, it wouldn't happen. Small, free and accessible grass-roots festivals with their community as their focus, such as Lamplighter, have a depth, a beauty, and a clear purpose that is very apparent and attractive to everyone, the home crowd and the visitors alike. They bring towns to life and make them shine. ”

Kerith Ogden
Artistic Director, Lamplighter

As a local authority we provide advice and guidance on safe planning and execution of such wonderful spectacles which has supported more than 100 annual events and festivals take place in Calderdale's public spaces.

108 Council small grants have been awarded to 71 festival organisers which have supported activity in 14 out of the 17 wards in Calderdale, totalling £221,243 in seed funding which supported further match funding levered into the borough of £1.3 million, demonstrating that a little goes a long way.

In the spirit of the destination and a show of 'true grit' of its residents; Calderdale showed real creativity in 2017 when Leaders

committed £100,000 funding alongside £50,000 from Community Foundation to commission the Landlines & Watermarks festival that supported local people in flood affected market towns; enabling them to revisit and retell their flood stories and celebrate their resilience through festival.

There is much debate nationally about the future sustainability of our high streets, and the need to evolve them to be more 'experience driven', giving shoppers and visitors more leisure, social and cultural activities to enjoy and participate in. If our high streets are to develop in this way, investment in events and festivals will be an important component of creating that experience.



Hebdon Bridge Arts Festival

Photo credit: Craig Shaw

Baby Steps and Giant Leaps

Our journey in developing the cultural offer and understanding this as a critical driver for the local and wider economy combined with supporting pride of place and ambassadorship is not complete. Taking Manchester as a casing example, this has been a 30 year journey for a destination that we could consider having fully achieved its aims and this is still ongoing.

Calderdale is a small, but perfectly formed, destination between two large cities that shout loudly. However, we are a destination

where town and country come together and our offer is strong in both; we support internationally acclaimed festivals, champion world class heritage and celebrate everything that is inclusive and distinct. We must continue to grow the appetite, the offer and the leadership to think differently, we need to expand upon, develop, connect local people and visitors to the cultural offer across Calderdale, whether this is to develop a skills pathway to create effective delivery agents or as an appreciative recipient of the offer and subsequent ambassador.

#KINDNESS & CREATIVITY

Actions - Calderdale must work towards its advantage in enhancing key cultural assets responding and appealing to new tourism markets. Throughout 2019 and beyond we must:

- Work with partners to ensure the public realm is not just sympathetic to, but fully embracing of our cultural offer, being proactive to secure more and creative development to enhance the offer to visitors – seizing opportunities including the **Future High Streets Fund** which could offer significant the opportunity for helping us to re-imagine town centres
- Use our film and TV presence as a way of positioning ourselves against competitor destinations, using the power of our culture and heritage to showcase the area as pioneering, resilient, distinctive and creative.
- Profile our independence and celebrate our distinctiveness through marketing and promoting our independent music, food & drink; our inclusive festivals and our LGBT friendly destination.
- Support capital investment which creates new creative events space and invest in events that create new experiences on our high street – eg more use of Albany Arcade in Halifax Borough Market.
- Maintain our profile of being locally distinct and using our cultural assets and people to do this, concentrating on repositioning our unique collections and buildings in more creative ways to create a visitor journey across the borough and not just hot spots
- Support future infrastructure developments for Shibden Hall to capitalise on the international profile the asset will receive from ‘Gentleman Jack’ to enhance visitor numbers, experience and spend
- Work collaboratively to ensure the story and interest transcends the Calder Valley and the attractions within
- Place culture at the heart of the high street and encourage businesses to support experience driven activity, third party festivals and events to revitalise interest.

VISION 2024

The Approach



NEXT STEPS

Calderdale's journey to becoming a visitor destination that is a force to be reckoned with has been an exciting one so far. Capital investment, public and private, hosting ambitious internationally acclaimed events such as Tour de France, several Tour de Yorkshire events and the Rugby League World Cup. Striving to work together with collaboration across sectors and no longer questioning whether we can compete, because we do compete, and we excel and thrive as a result.

To deliver the ambitions set out in the forward plan, in the coming months there needs to be detailed action plans developed across the themes of business growth and skills, culture and place making and marketing and communicating our story. This will require collaborative effort from public, private and third sector partners. However from work to date, we have every confidence that this will be done.

There needs to be continued investment in the events and festivals agenda to support the creative sector to thrive and to attract visitors to experience Calderdale and to come back.

There is a need to streamline duplicating organisations and partnerships and an incentive to plan from a shared agenda; this will be achieved by and understanding of the agenda and innovation at a strategic level across partner organisations.

Calderdale has come a long way since 2010, when the first visitor strategy was agreed and more detail is provided at appendix 1 regarding the last three years work.

Significant impact in relation to developing the visitor economy has come from real partnership effort and open cross sector working, seizing investment opportunities as and when they arise. Calderdale has so far, worked to a shared vision and has communicated this confidently and with conviction.

More work is needed in the coming months and years to improve further on this achievement to secure a resilient and progressive visitor economy.

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