

**Town
Village
Coast
Heritage
Wildlife
Industry
Culture**

West Norfolk Tourism Development Plan 2022-26

**A strategic plan
for local tourism and hospitality**



“2022 will see the production of business carried forward from 2020-21 as well as new sales. Product demand is changing: there will be more small-group travel and itineraries to destinations that are typically less crowded. Within established destinations, alternative attractions are sought as capacity restrictions affect options. For the tourism ecosystem, this represents opportunity on a scale not seen since the early 90s.

Our industry is still hurting: it still needs government support and urgent policy reform. But the people who work in it are highly resilient and creative.”

European Tourism Association
September 2021





Burnham Overy Staithe

The tourism department: product review

The Tourism department of the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk is probably best known as its visitor-facing brand name of 'Visit West Norfolk'. It is a longstanding local area Destination Management Organisation (henceforth referred to in this document as DMO) that is a place marketing and visitor promotions team staffed by two full-time officers (a Senior Tourism Officer and Tourism Support Officer).

Alongside visitor-facing marketing and tourism promotions, the team are also connected to place enhancement projects and, connected to its Regeneration and Economic Development directorate within the local authority, can be involved in regeneration projects around the west Norfolk area in a variety of ways to help reinforce the fact that west Norfolk is a superb place to visit, live and work in.

Visit West Norfolk does not operate local public-facing tourism enquiry services such as a Tourist Information Centre or Tourist Information Point (such services currently supplied by Alive West Norfolk at two of their venues). Instead, the VWN team possess and utilise an extensive portfolio of digital information platforms and printed tourism literature, all used for a whole variety of ongoing, seasonal and one-off west Norfolk tourism campaigns to attract national and international visitors to the area. An internal audit of the Tourism department was conducted from 2020-21. The review noted the increasing audience numbers that the department's digital platforms reach.

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The Visit West Norfolk platforms

The Visit West Norfolk tourism portfolio currently includes the primary **Visit West Norfolk place marketing website** (with its **very active social media** offshoots), the **Explore West Norfolk trails website**, the **Walk West Norfolk app** and **Explore West Norfolk app**. Other related digital platforms the VWN team actively contribute to include the **Sail The Wash leisure sailing website** and the leading regional partner tourism websites such as **Visit Norfolk** and **Visit East of England**. The VWN also manage and produce up to **12 different printed west Norfolk tourism leaflets** each and every year, the team often giving their support and input to printed literature for key annual events too.

The VWN team actively attracts and supports a variety of national and international tourism-related **press enquiries** to help market west Norfolk, promote local venues and highlight other tourism and hospitality businesses, including the provision of regular access to the Tourism department's ever-expanding **VWN media archives**.

With its extensive **local and regional partnership work**, Visit West Norfolk aims to make sure west Norfolk is always highlighted and included as much as possible as a 'must visit' and vital destination within the tourism industry of the county of Norfolk and the eastern region as a whole.

The VWN department has witnessed and adapted to many changes within the national and international tourism industry over the decades the department has existed, including the increased reliance on digital information and the now-standard online booking platforms, the international decline in the reliance of traditional face-to-face TICs and England's disbanding of the regional Tourist Board authority structure in favour of modern DMOs. The biggest change to the national tourism industry is likely the ongoing fallout from COVID-19 in general and the negative impact of the pandemic on the operations of west Norfolk tourism businesses in particular.

The VWN tourism portfolio highlights



Visit West Norfolk Website



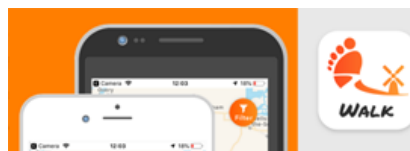
Explore West Norfolk Website



VWN Social Media Channels



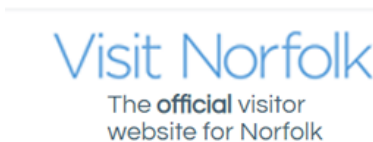
Explore West Norfolk App



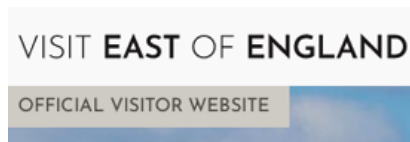
Walk West Norfolk App



*Sail The Wash Website
(admin/maintenance)*



*Visit Norfolk Website
(marketing partner)*



*Visit East of England Website
(marketing partner)*



*Where to Stay in West Norfolk
(printed booklet)*



*Discover King's Lynn
(printed leaflet)*



*Hunstanton Mini Guide
(printed leaflet)*



*Downham Market Mini Guide
(printed leaflet)*

Plus ad hoc printed titles of limited print-runs

Introduction

The west Norfolk tourism industry has been hit very hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. The **overall value of tourism income for west Norfolk fell -56% in 2020** and the **total amount of visitors to west Norfolk fell around -57%** for that same year, both in comparison to 2019 figures*. If we take the overall volume of west Norfolk jobs supported by the local tourism industry, **we see local jobs in decline by -36% for 2020** in comparison to pre-pandemic 2019. It remains to be seen how (or if) tourism income in 2021 has improved within the west Norfolk area in comparison to the first year of the pandemic.

On page 7 of this document we explore how the national picture looks for the UK tourism industry as a whole but, from a west Norfolk level, a combination of the local tourism income figures already received and regular feedback from the area's tourism businesses through completed tourism business surveys and B2B liaison with the Tourism department indicates that there are several major negative impacts that will continue to hinder the speed of recovery for west Norfolk tourism if not addressed as soon as possible. It is a combination of these *local* negative impacts and major reported issues affecting the *national* tourism industry which influence the six key strategic aims stated within this *West Norfolk Tourism Development Plan 2022-26*.

West Norfolk tourism business contacts and the West Norfolk Tourism Forum executive committee members reviewed the stated strategic aims across the summer and autumn of 2021. Their input has been vital to the progress and planning behind this tourism development plan.



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* = figures taken from the 'Economic Impact of Tourism: West Norfolk 2020' report.

Looking back to 2019, Norfolk's tourism trade had hit a record high, with more people than ever employed in the sector. Figures released by Visit East of England in 2020 show that the value of tourism grew by 3% to £5.5bn and tourism-related employment rose by over 3% for the region. In Norfolk tourism jobs were up 3% to 69,266 and in Suffolk they were up 4% to 44,498. This means tourism was 19.5% of all employment in Norfolk and 14.2% in Suffolk.

From the start of the first wave of lockdown in 2020 Visit West Norfolk collaborated with Visit East of England on issuing periodic business surveys to their local area tourism contacts to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on the industry after such an impressive previous year. The findings highlighted the high level of furloughed staff and the continuing (and vital) need for grant support from local and national government. Copies of these tourism business surveys can still be found under the Press and Media section of the Visit East of England website.

The sheer amount of local tourism businesses negatively impacted by the COVID-19 related drop of revenue meant that the tourism industry focussed heavily on grant support throughout the 2020-22 period. From early August 2021 the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk had administered £77 million worth of grants to local businesses. Amongst such grants over 140 businesses in west Norfolk had benefited from more than £667,000 in the Refresh Reopen grant scheme administered by the borough council. Some grant support schemes of benefit to local tourism were still active as of early 2022, including the Welcome Back Fund (the closure of the fund being March 2022).

This west Norfolk tourism development plan has been developed within the context of the longer-term recovery and strategic ambitions of both the borough council's Regeneration & Economic Development department and of the wider tourism sector. Indeed, the Tourism department has already commenced work on addressing the six main strategic aims highlighted within this document, and see this plan as a fluid, evolving document with space to periodically respond and be proactively updated to face future issues within the recovering local tourism industry.

The west Norfolk tourism development plan incorporates aims that can impact on other aspects of the local visitor economy, such as leisure, culture and sport, but its primary focus is on tourism and hospitality.

The national picture

From 2020 and into 2021, alongside the several emerging national and local grant schemes the UK saw an extension to the national furlough scheme, and the Bounce Back loan scheme was also launched. Despite such support on both the local and national level we are still seeing businesses fail. From an attractions and events point of view 2020 saw the national tourism sector lose the Easter break, the May Bank Holidays, all of October school half term and the full Christmas holiday period. We saw mass cancellations across the board too, from accommodation bookings to events, activities and open days to workshops, and much more. Such a high level of cancellations may have lowered somewhat since that time, but it has not stopped as of late 2021. As from late 2021 the nation was still in the very early stages of business recovery. This is mainly due to the UK having little more than the past 6 months of annual trade for 2021 (and just one summer season) to even begin to recover from the pandemic and the economic impact from all previous lockdowns (plus new variants of the virus to contend with).



The national picture for tourism is, of course, changing all of the time, evolving as the situation changes - particularly in relation to tiered levels of restrictions which could be imposed on local and international travel for periods of time since the last full lockdown was eased in the spring of 2021, as well as the roll out of the vaccination booster programme from Autumn 2021 onwards. Nonetheless, this development plan does serve as an outline for immediate priorities and focal points to secure agreement and support from major local organisations and stakeholders.

The West Norfolk tourism department also acknowledges the impact on UK tourism from the ongoing European Capital of Smart Tourism initiative, which recognises outstanding achievements by tourism destinations in four categories: sustainability, accessibility, digitalisation as well as cultural heritage and creativity. Visit West Norfolk believes that the west Norfolk tourism industry needs to adapt to such aims too to succeed in the modern, post-pandemic world of the "New Traveller" being laid out before us with every passing month of the ongoing tourism recovery period.

The west Norfolk tourism development plan includes references to, and strong influence from, the following key current UK tourism industry and business support documents (as of December 2021):

The BCKLWN 'Recovery Action Plan' (draft notes), the New Anglia LEP/VEE 'Destination Management Prospectus', the 'Economic Impact of Tourism: West Norfolk 2020' report, the 'Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Tourism Recovery Plan' (of national focus), and the DCMS 'UK Tourism Scenario Forecasts' document (also of national focus).



The Strategic Aims Workshop, November 2021

How the six strategic aims were finalised

Although this Tourism Development Plan is a 'working' document and will likely adapt with the local or national situation over the course of its five-year lifespan, it was important to set out key strategic aims from the outset to bring a sense of focus and departmental priority to the many different strands of work currently being conducted within the local tourism industry.

To help the Tourism department finalise these main strategic aims it consulted with the longstanding West Norfolk Tourism Forum. The forum has existed for 34 years and includes key local tourism contacts as executive committee members, such as representatives from: the West Norfolk Hospitality Association, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce & Industry, West Norfolk Site Operators, West Norfolk Holiday Home Owners Association, Hunstanton Chamber of Trade, Hunstanton Civic Society, Hunstanton Town Council, King's Lynn Vancouver Quarter, Downham Market Town Council, The King's Lynn BID, and the College of West Anglia amongst others.

As mentioned elsewhere in this document, the Tourism department consulted with the West Norfolk Tourism Forum throughout much of 2021, though the forum's own AGM event in November 2021 (with AGM invites going out to hundreds of west Norfolk's tourism businesses each year) also provided a good opportunity for the Tourism department to hold an interactive 'Strategic Aims Workshop' for those in attendance. This workshop gave the department valuable direct engagement with local tourism businesses and it collected important feedback about the different strategic themes. This feedback has influenced the aims within the Tourism Development Plan.

West Norfolk Tourism Development Plan 2022-26



Comments received from the Strategic Aims Workshop

Some highlights of comments received from businesses at the 'Strategic Aims Workshop' as well as other feedback provided by local Tourism businesses in 2021 about such strategic aims include:

Employment & Training: *"[There is a] need to improve bus timetables to allow tourism/hospitality staff to travel to work on the bus earlier and later in the day..."*

"Advice [needed] regarding retention of volunteers."

"Development of apprenticeships for local high school age children to be encouraged to work in hospitality."

"Recruitment is incredibly difficult right now, as the entire hospitality industry is struggling to find enough staff. That is primarily Brexit, partly Covid, but exasperated by the lack of housing in hotspot areas. However I am also aware that every other sector seems to be having the same problems, staffing in hospitals, schools & supermarkets."

Visitor Accessibility: *"Advice [needed] regarding replacement of outdated lifts [in the Museum] as accessibility has been limited by an unusable lift."*

Sustainable Tourism: *"[There is a need for more visitor information about] sustainable travel, including for cyclists, bus travelling and [sustainable] tourism sites along such bus routes too."*

Innovation & Digitisation: *"SEO training and links into markets online [needed]."*

Experiential Tourism: *"Food experiences and tourism. We have considered creating 'Tasting Talks', but we are a little concerned regarding health & safety."*

Developing the Cultural Offer: *"Advice [needed by a museum] regarding how to involve traveller communities."*

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Employment
Sustainable Tourism
Innovation
Accessibility
Experiential Tourism
Developing the Product

Six strategic aims

As previously stated, the six following strategic aims have been driven by a combination of local tourism income figures, findings from tourism business surveys and general feedback from west Norfolk-based tourism businesses since the first UK lockdown of March 2020. These aims have subsequently been reviewed by the West Norfolk Tourism Forum executive committee. Finally, an interactive workshop was conducted with tourism businesses at the West Norfolk Tourism Forum AGM event, held in November 2021.

Supporting comments and notations from existing tourism and regeneration plans (from both a local and national level) are also woven into these six core strategic aims, as noted within the section of each applicable aim.

A multitude of other elements within the modern tourism industry landscape are covered by these six strategic aims. For example, the impact on climate change and wildlife by tourism in west Norfolk is linked to the strategic aim for **Sustainable Tourism**. Similarly, 4G/5G signal quality within west Norfolk (so important for visitor access to tourism information) is linked to the plan's strategic aim for **Innovation & Digitisation**. The strategic aim for **Employment** in the local tourism industry includes other aspects such as training support, skills and even public transport mobility needs of hospitality staff in the local area.



1: Impacts on employment within the tourism sector

One of the key strategic aims for the west Norfolk Tourism department is a focus on supporting local business recovery from the impacts on employment within west Norfolk's tourism industry. Such negative impacts on employment, as widely reported on a nationwide basis in recent times, may not wholly be the fallout from the pandemic itself. Nonetheless, such impacts on employment arguably impedes the ability for (and speed of) tourism recovery in the local area.

There should be the strategic aim to **focus on skills and local workforce support**. Utilising active partnerships with leaders and key stakeholders of the west Norfolk tourism industry, the Tourism department could actively help to **promote the many positive elements of working in the area's tourism and hospitality sectors**. Such promotions could explore employment opportunities, training and skills support, tourism industry-based apprenticeships and related opportunities within the voluntary sector at the same time as addressing potential visitors to the area.

Based on feedback received from some local tourism contacts in recent times, there also needs to be an active sharing of information on how best to *retain* staff and volunteers.

Actions/Monitoring: Tourism Department to report progress to WNTF Executive Committee (quarterly) and report to Employment Engagement Network (monthly) and to the Good Jobs Project team.

2: 'Sustainable Tourism' and the natural environment

"Economic growth must go hand-in-hand with greater protection for our natural landscapes, our forests, beaches, clean air, and areas of outstanding beauty rich in biodiversity." East of England Destination Development Prospectus '21.

Visit West Norfolk has been working with such local environmental groups as Norfolk Coast Partnership's 'Reopening the Coast' group since the early months of the pandemic, **helping to identify and report any known negative impact on the west Norfolk environment from visitors** to the area - particularly the impact from the phenomenon of the 'New Traveller' (first-time staycationers and visitors to rural and coastal west Norfolk). From mid-2020 onwards the Tourism department has been encouraging **responsible tourism** and **informed travel** which can positively contribute to the local economy, connected local supply chains and the environment.

The Tourism department identifies **the importance of minimising any risk of over-tourism** as part of the Borough Council's duty to protect its natural resources and cultural heritage. West Norfolk has a varied and rich landscape with areas which are highly ecologically vulnerable, but key solutions to tourist flow-through management throughout the area could include a combined approach of **promoting all-season tourism**, wider-reaching **responsible tourism messaging**, supporting **parish council visitor development plans**, and attempts at **spreading tourist demand across the west Norfolk geography** (where appropriate) to help minimise hotspots and footfall bottlenecks in the future.

Alongside Visit East of England, the Tourism department will align itself with the Government's 2021 Sustainable Tourism Plan, but the department will also align with the BCKLWN Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.



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'Responsible Tourism' signage in Downham Market



The Tourism department is an active member of the AONB/Norfolk Coast Visitor Pressures Group, through which contact the department has become aware of some local parish councils producing their own development plans (such as the *Heacham Neighbourhood Development Plan*, for example) which sometimes focus on how parish councils can pro-actively manage tourist-related issues. The Tourism department has recently made enquiries as to the possibility of the foundation of a county-wide rural equivalent of that coastal Visitor Pressures Group, if deemed necessary.

Looking forward, Visit West Norfolk will be investing time, work and budget into a new brand for sustainable and responsible tourism across the local area, titled *Visit West Norfolk Naturally*. The purpose behind the campaign messaging will be to attract responsible tourists to the local area at the same time as showcasing the best of west Norfolk's sustainable tourism destinations and local produce businesses across all seasons. This campaign will initially compliment similar 'green tourism' branding exercises launching across East Anglia at the same time by regional tourism industry partners. Feedback and any notable successes from this ...*Naturally* campaign could support the idea of making this branded content a permanent part of the Visit West Norfolk portfolio of platforms. The Tourism department has procured four new website domain names related to this future ...*Naturally* campaign.

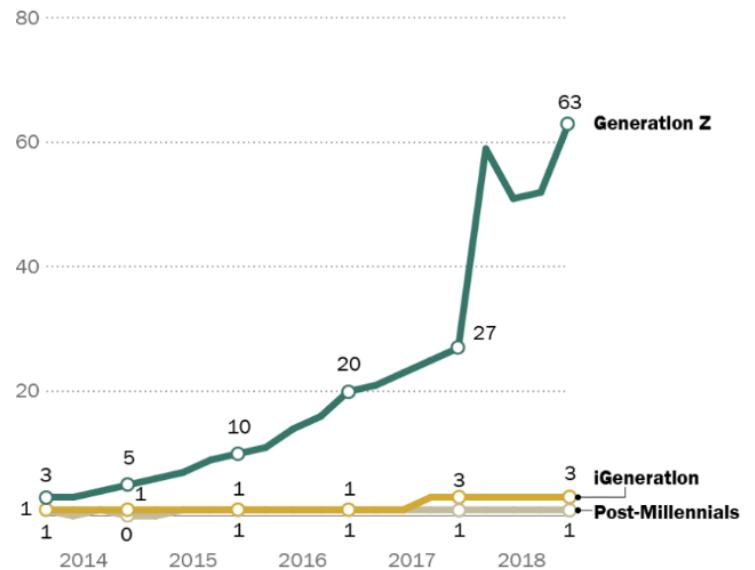
Actions/Monitoring: Tourism Department to report progress to WNTF Executive Committee (quarterly) and to both the Visitor Pressures Working Group and Norfolk Tourism Recovery Best Practice Group (monthly).

“Generation Z dominates online searches for information”

Pew Research

Generation Z dominates online searches for information on the post-Millennial generation

Relative U.S. search volume of generation terms (Google Trends)



Note: Google Trends data are based on weekly query volume for a given query relative to the highest weekly volume of any queries being compared within the time period and geographic region examined. The maximum relative search volume in the period is 100. The trends above are quarterly averages of weekly relative search volume and include shortened versions of search terms (for example, “Generation Z” also includes “Gen Z”). Values do not reflect the absolute number of searches.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Google Trends (accessed Jan. 8, 2019).

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Identifying potential audiences for new promotions

3: Innovation and digitisation

Utilising future public realm improvements, modernisation, the King’s Lynn Town Investment Plan, possible 4G/5G improvements, promotion of tech support workshops and tech grant information for local businesses, and any local or regional 'Internet of Things' network (amongst other elements), **west Norfolk cannot stay still if its local tourism industry wishes to meet the demands of the modern visitor.**

In amongst many current promotional and digital marketing trends, Visit West Norfolk identifies a need to increase social interaction with visitors for User Generated Content (the UGC trend) and to more effectively capture authentic visitor interest in the west Norfolk area. This aim could include the use of immensely popular platforms such as Crowdriff and Tiktok alongside possible commissioning of mid-level social influencers in a fresh approach to how digital promotions and online messaging are being transmitted and received.

In adapting to the needs of modern audiences, Visit West Norfolk also **aims to conduct innovative and stand-out grassroots promotional concepts** utilising sound and ambient visuals, particularly for capturing interest from Gen Z (visitors up to the age of 25) and affluent millennial (age 26-41) demographics. Recent tourism trends research, including the 2022 YouGov ‘[Youth of Today...](#)’ report, identify that these two demographics are arguably the key markets for growth in post-pandemic (and post-Facebook) times - at least when it comes to positive engagement with less traditional tourism digital marketing methods.

Actions/Monitoring: Tourism Department to report progress to WNTF Executive Committee (quarterly) and report to the DMO Coalition Group (fortnightly).

4: Visitor accessibility

“An inclusive and accessible tourism offer that meets customer needs is good for both businesses and consumers. Before COVID-19, half a million British adults cited ‘lack of accessibility provision’ as the reason they did not take a domestic trip in the previous 12 months.” The DCMS Tourism Recovery Plan 2021.

Although this strategic aim does identify the need to Improve travel and tourism information for visitors with varied physical requirements, there is also an identified **need to focus on making west Norfolk more accessible for visitors** in other important ways too, from linking up existing pathways and physical routes to making improvements to public signage (both digital and traditional displays) and interpretation boards across all three west Norfolk towns, the strategic aim for improving visitor accessibility within the area is arguably a broad but necessary one.

Work is already underway by the Visit West Norfolk team to **actively engage with current projects that approach this aim for improved visitor accessibility in different ways**. From the Norfolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to future expansions of the Norfolk Coast Path, and from newly-formed local community groups who aim to improve and expand upon historic trails of visitor appeal in the area to overseeing various interpretation board replacements within the local area, the Tourism department sees such improvements and developments as an important element of modernising the area and encouraging economic growth, to help meet the many requirements and expectations of the modern traveller.

Actions/Monitoring: Tourism Department to report progress to WNTF Executive Committee (quarterly) and report to Norfolk LCWIP Group (monthly).



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RSPB Titchwell Marsh



5: Experiential Tourism - bookable experiences

Visit West Norfolk believes that out-of-season tourism is no longer a choice but a way forward for the west Norfolk tourism industry to begin to recover. There is ample contemporary evidence across the industry, from recent Visit-Britain consumer surveys to national investment in the EXPERIENCE programme, emphasising the need for tourism businesses to adapt their offers, balance changes in consumer demand, and enhance their offered visitor experiences to continue to attract much-needed income across the calendar year.

Different seasons may well mean **different markets to attract**, and visitors do want to engage with our tourism business offering with all of their senses. The **growing industry trend for such Experiential Tourism can be a key driver for low season income**, though we also need to recognise that west Norfolk has **a truly fantastic out-of-season offer ready for more focus**, more marketing and more promotional opportunities. A traditional single-focus on an annual summer campaign is no longer an adequate approach for our local tourism offer.

With the aim of a more efficient tourism business recovery process in mind, **the local tourism industry really needs to create new (or build upon existing) high quality bookable visitor experiences** which are superb no matter what the weather may be. West Norfolk's tourism offer needs to be as strong and enticing during cold, wet and dark times of the year as it surely is during the summer season.

Through local collaboration, innovative visitor experiences do not have to be tech-based nor specifically cater to contemporary tourism trends. There is scope to build upon a traditional sense of place and retro aesthetics, remembrance and an appeal to an unspoilt sense of nostalgia whilst still offering a high quality experience with modern resources. Any such marketing approach can include modern interpretations of storytelling and user-generated content (UGC).

Though Visit West Norfolk recognises that the creation of new experiences can require a lot of development, if they are innovative and communicated well, visitors can do much of the work and share your experiences for you.

Actions/Monitoring: Tourism Department to report progress to WNTF Executive Committee (quarterly) and report to EXPERIENCE Norfolk Team (monthly).

6: Developing the cultural product

Developing the cultural offer within west Norfolk's three towns at the same time as nurturing diverse creative and cultural opportunities across the area is vital to keep the area relevant and competitive within the UK's modern tourism sector, ultimately contributing to the area's strong appeal to (and hopefully surpassing the expectations of) modern visitors and their families across a range of social, economic and cultural demographics.

This fact has already been recognised by the borough. For example, the King's Lynn Town Investment Plan (TIP) developed from 2020-21 sets out a strategic plan to address the opportunities and challenges that face the town in a changing world through 5 priorities for investment. The mission set out in the King's Lynn Town Investment Plan includes;

"A repurposed town centre with new experiences and businesses; increasing footfall, enhancing cultural opportunities, with its different parts better connected."

This mission and other similar objectives across the west Norfolk area can be supported by the Tourism department in several ways, not least within its existing support for the Guildhall Complex & Creative Hub (looking to provide training and workspaces for creative industries), its ongoing work as a member of the Downham Market Town Team (or any future version of that group) and future support within any coastal communities work - whether within Hunstanton or across the west Norfolk coastline.

Actions/Monitoring: Quarterly reports to WNTF Executive Committee and submissions to Norfolk Museums Service when appropriate.





Houghton Hall & Estate, Houghton

Inspiring success and demand

To help achieve efficient local tourism recovery, increase visitor demand for the high quality tourism appeal that west Norfolk can clearly offer around the calendar year, and assist in the modernisation of the local tourism industry in general, the Tourism department believes that we must first ask some difficult questions about our local area: **Where are the weaknesses in our collective tourism offer? Where within west Norfolk can good value and fresh, high quality visitor experiences be created? How can these new ideas be tested and proven successful?** Indeed, what do we (as an industry) even want to measure as being "successful" within our local area? (immediate financial success is one thing, but there is great value in exploring a longer-term experiential tourism vision which seeks to inspire repeat returns beyond traditional seasonal periods in the future).

Our constant work with the West Norfolk Tourism Forum and many stakeholder groups across the borough gives the Tourism department regular insight into how local businesses are working hard to adapt to changing demand and recruitment. Within our own communications to local tourism contacts in our growing database, Visit West Norfolk is committed to seeking out and highlighting funding and new training opportunities, sharing success stories, offering potential inspiration and different ways of conducting promotions in the post-pandemic era.



Collaboration and partnership

This document does not focus on government or local authority grants, nor seeks to specify geographical areas of the borough. Instead, **this Tourism Development Plan lays out a selection of key aims or focal points for the department in an attempt to offer a broad range of support for the whole of the local tourism industry.**

As mentioned earlier in this plan, the Tourism department is a place marketing and visitor promotions department. As such, we do recognise the realistic limitations within the remit of the Tourism department for effecting greater positive change when looking at the six documented key strategic aims. It is important to continue to be clear about the scope of the Tourism department, especially when looking at public or local business expectations. However, we do believe that the department possesses the ability for engagement, positive collaboration, the supply of industry-relevant supporting information, the assistance and input within partnership working across the county, and the raising of important tourism industry issues to appropriate authorities.

There is also scope for the department to explore upcoming funding support for brand new projects which can benefit local tourism at the same time as helping to address the six key aims of this plan. Nonetheless, the Tourism department believes that progress and development can be more effectively achieved for west Norfolk via collaboration and partnership work across the spectrum of the local tourism industry. Such future collaborative work will certainly include bodies such as parish councils, town councils and the county council, but also with both established and new SMEs, independent retailers, heritage organisations and even local charity groups. See **Appendix I** of this document for a current list of many groups the Tourism Department is already collaborating with.



West Norfolk: a 'must visit' destination

West Norfolk is in the enviable position of having almost the full range of geographical identifiers for tourists with a variety of tastes, all within one fairly accessible contained area: from unspoilt rural villages to coastal hotspots for leisure sailing, historic market towns to authentic seaside resort family experiences, and from wildlife attractions to classic English pubs and trails, **the diversity of the area already holds great potential in expanding the traditional visitor "season" into an all-year-round 'must visit' destination for promotion.** This is why the Tourism department is, probably for the first real time, not merely concentrating a big promotional 'push' for the annual summer season, but now involved in the creation of a full and active, year-round interlinked promotional plan for the whole of 2022 (and then onwards, for each calendar year beyond that).

Even when minimising the traditional bias towards summer season-led marketing and promotions it is still important to monitor and take advantage of all current tourism industry trends which could be applicable to the area at all given times: **mindfulness, perceived sanctuaries for mental health and well-being getaways in the wild, hands-on experiential offerings, the increased linking up of cross-county pathways, building upon a strong alternative transport offer and User Generated Content** all have vital roles to play in making west Norfolk a whole-year 'must visit' destination in the post-pandemic era. Indeed, it is the overall purpose of this development plan to support and highlight such different facets and tools within the local tourism industry, ultimately to help west Norfolk develop and grow ever stronger as a modern 'must visit' destination.

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The next steps: an ongoing review

As described elsewhere within this document (pages 09-10), the west Norfolk tourism development plan has passed through collaborative and initial feedback sessions to help shape and focus its main "rule of six" aims. The next step would be to incorporate any final changes requested by the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk before the plan is made permanently available for the general public via the new Visit West Norfolk website from late Summer 2022 onwards in both the current format and in a 10-page summarised version.

The Tourism department does recognise that this plan needs to be flexible and adaptable in response to these changing times. As such, the six strategic aims may well change - or even be completely replaced - at certain points across the natural lifetime of this plan. To put this sense of flexibility into motion within the plan (and to identify any successes and further needed work), a regular periodic review of this development plan and its aims is deemed necessary.

The review process for this development plan

All stages of progress or related issues identified throughout our West Norfolk tourism management plans in the past were reported to the quarterly West Norfolk Tourism Forum meetings, to receive immediate feedback from the tourism forum's executive committee members.

This method of progress review from such local tourism industry peers is, once again, proposed for this new tourism development plan. The list of the current West Norfolk Tourism Forum committee members (and which group or business from the west Norfolk tourism industry they represent on that forum) is given on **page 09** of this West Norfolk Tourism Development Plan.

The next quarterly meeting of the West Norfolk Tourism Forum is scheduled for late **Summer 2022**, upon which time the Tourism department will give its first updates to the forum committee members for feedback and ask for any necessary adjustments to the previously-agreed aims currently detailed within this document. Printed and bound copies of this development plan document will also be given out to businesses who attend the WNTF AGM evening event in the autumn of 2022 and a small surplus amount kept in stock for those who contact us for printed copies.

Appendix I: Collaborative Relationships

The Tourism Department's Collaborative Groups (A-Z)

To help the Tourism department move forward with focus on the six main strategic aims it currently consults with the following groups, organisations and bodies of industry (amongst others):

- **British Destinations** [VWN being a formal member of this national tourism industry lobbying group].
- **Discover Downham Tourism Team.**
- **Downham Market Town Council.**
- **Employer Engagement Network** [Norfolk-wide, with links to YPFE].
- **Film Friendly Norfolk Forum.**
- **Good Jobs Project.**
- **Hanse Sustainable Business Group.**
- **Hunstanton Town Council.**
- **King's Lynn & Norfolk LCWIP Group.**
- **King's Lynn Town Centre Public Realm & Repurposing Project Group.**
- **King's Lynn Walsingham Way Group.**
- **NCP Visitor Pressures Working Group** [Norfolk Coast].
- **Norfolk & Suffolk DMO Coalition.**
- **Norfolk Coast Partnership Strategy Group.**
- **Norfolk Museums Service.**
- **Norfolk Tourism Best Practice Group.**
- **Norfolk Trails / National Trails** [NCC leads].
- **Visit Britain** [via quarterly DMO calls].
- **Visit East of England.**
- **Visit Norfolk** [Visit West Norfolk/BCKLWN are executive committee members].
- **Visit North Norfolk.**
- **West Norfolk Tourism Forum** [with reps from: the West Norfolk Hospitality Association, West Norfolk Site Operators, West Norfolk Holiday Home Owners Association, Hunstanton Chamber of Trade, Hunstanton Civic Society, Hunstanton Town Council, King's Lynn Vancouver Quarter, Downham Market Town Council, The King's Lynn BID, and the College of West Anglia amongst others].

A strategic development plan for local tourism and hospitality

Version 5.0

Visit West Norfolk
Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
King's Court
Chapel Street
King's Lynn PE30 1EX

West Norfolk Tourism Forum

SEA ● COUNTRYSIDE ● HERITAGE

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**

