

Winchester District

Tourism Strategy

2026 - 2031



VISIT
WINCHESTER



Tourism plays a vital role
in the Winchester District,
driving ***local growth***
while celebrating the area's
rich heritage, culture
and ***landscapes.***



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Foreword

The Winchester District Tourism Strategy is a shared vision that celebrates what makes our district one of England's most captivating and welcoming destinations.

Winchester has long been a place where history, landscape, culture and community come together, and this strategy sets out how we will protect these strengths while supporting a thriving, sustainable visitor economy for the years ahead.

Tourism is a vital part of our district's identity and prosperity. From our historic city centre to our market towns and rural villages, the visitor economy supports local businesses, creates employment opportunities, and sustains the cultural and natural assets that residents and visitors cherish. As we look to the future, it is essential that we continue to nurture these assets while adapting to changing expectations and new opportunities.

This strategy has been shaped through close collaboration with stakeholders, businesses, and residents across the district. Their insight and ambition have ensured that the priorities we set out are rooted in local knowledge and shared aspirations. Together, we have identified clear pathways to strengthen our year-round offer, enhance the visitor experience, and champion regenerative tourism that benefits both our communities and our environment.

Winchester has a powerful opportunity to grow its visitor economy by unlocking further growth from its current visitor base of families and older, affluent day-trippers, whilst also looking to capture the imaginations and tap into the high value of younger cultural foodies and experience seekers.

Our aim is simple: to ensure Winchester district remains a place people feel inspired to visit, proud to live in, and confident to invest in. Whether through improved connectivity, enriched cultural programming, support for businesses operating within the sector, or the promotion of our exceptional experiences, heritage and landscapes, this strategy sets the foundation for a vibrant, forward-looking tourism sector.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed their time, enthusiasm and expertise. Your commitment to the future of Winchester district is present through every part of this strategy. I look forward to working together as we bring this vision to life.



Councillor Lucille Thompson

Cabinet Member for Business & Culture



Introduction

This tourism strategy for Winchester district has been developed from a thorough analysis of visitor data, market trends, and stakeholder consultations. The purpose of this strategy is to guide the Winchester district visitor economy toward a new vision: to evolve from a day-trip destination into a vibrant, high-value, short-break and overnight destination. This strategy is not merely a report; it is a blueprint for collaborative action, grounded in a robust evidence base.

About Winchester district

Winchester, England's ancient capital, is a destination of profound historical significance, celebrated for its rich heritage, iconic architecture, and authentic 'quintessential England' appeal. Beyond its world-renowned cathedral and The Great Hall, Winchester district offers a diverse and evolving experience, from a vibrant food and drink scene, diverse and picturesque market towns, rich countryside with a unique position as the gateway to the South Downs National Park. Spanning 250 square miles of central Hampshire, the district's visitor economy attracts over **7.8 million day visitors** and **220,000 overnight visitors**, generating **over £292m to the local economy**, supporting **over 5760 jobs**, equivalent to 7% of the district's employment.

How the strategy was developed

This strategy is the culmination of a comprehensive project undertaken by Winchester City Council with support from Blue Sail. The project's purpose was to create a robust evidence base, including extensive data analysis, stakeholder consultations, and a review of the district's visitor economy, to inform and shape a new tourism strategy for the entire district.

The full evidence base can be viewed at www.visitwinchester.co.uk/industry-and-trade

Purpose of the strategy

The primary purpose of this strategy is to guide Winchester district's visitor economy into a new era of sustainable growth. The strategy serves as a collective roadmap for the entire district, providing a clear vision and an actionable plan to enhance Winchester's appeal. It recognizes that the responsibility for its success rests not just with the council, but with every business, attraction, and individual stakeholder who contributes to the visitor experience. It is a strategy for the district, not just the district council. It is built on the principle that sustainable tourism growth benefits all sectors and residents. The approach is rooted in an objective, evidence-based methodology, ensuring that all recommendations are practical, relevant, and designed to foster a shared sense of ownership among all stakeholders. The strategy provides a framework for a unified effort, ensuring that every action - from marketing to product development - works in harmony to achieve our shared vision.



The Winchester District Tourism Strategy also provides a robust framework that not only strengthens our local visitor economy but also positions us as a leading contributor to the wider delivery of tourism support across a broader geography. This approach aligns with the ambitions of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and creates opportunities to play a pivotal role in future devolution arrangements, ensuring that Winchester district's expertise and assets drive regional growth and collaboration. Moreover, Winchester's instrumental role in shaping and delivering the Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and Winchester Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP), and its associated Destination Management Plan, will ensure co-ordination of priorities across the region.

Looking forward

Our Vision

From its iconic cathedral and vibrant food scene to chalk landscapes and characterful market towns, the Winchester district will stand out as a leading destination embracing sustainability, collaboration and creativity.

It will be the quirky heart of England - where history meets innovation and every visit feels unforgettable.

Aims

Winchester district will be a destination that achieves **sustainable growth**, is **confident & bold**, with an **improved experience**, fostered in an environment of **partnership & collaboration**.

Sustainable growth

Blending the traditional and contemporary, Winchester district's distinctive destination story now speaks to new, younger markets, from foodies to families, whilst retaining appeal to its existing, older market.

Confident & bold

Uniquely placed at the very heart of England's history, Winchester is far more than a charming heritage city. One of Hampshire's tourism anchors, it's the food capital of the South East, home to award-winning vineyards, artisan producers and excellent eateries, as well as tempting experiences. It's a green destination with exemplary eco credentials and easily accessed nature from water meadows to the rare chalk grasslands of the South Downs National Park. It's a vibrant place with engaging attractions and experiences as well as a compelling cultural and events programme across the district. It's a well-connected spot, with bus and active travel options opening up access to everything the market towns and villages have to offer.

Improved experience

Welcoming and well-managed, Winchester district is increasingly a destination of choice, and more visitors are opting to stay, whether in the city or surrounds. This increased spend is making a valuable contribution to the sustainable growth of the visitor economy and ultimately supports place-making for the benefit of both residents and visitors alike. And this growing popularity has put Winchester district firmly on the radar of the private sector, driving a range of investments, particularly in relation to accommodation and experiences.

Partnership & collaboration

Partnerships underpin this success. Acting as an enabler, the local authority has engaged with the tourism sector, understood their needs and helped to move the dial forward. Within the wider strategic context, including the regional LVEP, Winchester's confidence and collaborative mindset have ensured its position as a key player, driving regional collaboration and national recognition.

Strategic approach and objectives

The objectives to achieve this vision are ambitious yet practical:

Objective 1

Increase the economic value of tourism by growing the overnight visitor market.

While Winchester attracts a large volume of day visitors (7.86 million), they account for a lower spend compared to staying visitors. The strategy aims to increase the number of staying visitors, who, though fewer in number (220,000), contribute significantly more to the local economy and account for 19% of the total tourism spend.

Objective 2

Develop a more dynamic and contemporary brand identity.

The current perception of Winchester is often “old-fashioned” and “indistinct”. The strategy seeks to enrich its heritage offer with other themes like food and drink, events, and nature, creating a “Heritage Plus” approach to appeal to new and younger markets.

Objective 3

Enhance and expand the visitor offer and product.

This includes joining up existing experiences and creating new ones that go beyond the district boundary, especially in food and drink, events, and nature. The strategy also aims to support the development of more quality and family-friendly accommodation to address the current shortage and encourage longer stays.

Objective 4

Strengthen collaboration and management within the tourism sector.

The strategy emphasizes the need for the local authority to act as a convenor, bringing the sector together to improve marketing, share data, and provide training and support to businesses.

Objective 5

Improve connectivity and infrastructure.

A key objective is to improve rural transport and active travel links to make it easier for visitors to access the wider district's attractions and to promote sustainable travel.

Strategic approach

Working towards this vision and these objectives over the five years of this strategy will require focused effort across several areas. Some ‘quick wins’ will have an immediate impact. Other actions will take longer or will be about preparing the ground for longer term more strategic goals.

This strategy, in the following sections, sets out priorities under four areas:

- **Visitor market focus**
- **Positioning & Destination Marketing**
- **Destination Development**
- **Destination Management**

Within each of these areas are a series of priorities and suggested actions.

Some of the priorities and actions are part of broader strategic ambitions around for example transport. However, it is critical for future programmes of work to ensure that from a policy and operational perspective, visitor needs are fully considered and adopted as part of planning and delivery. There is an important role for Visit Winchester to have a voice in these plans and to ensure that the needs of visitors are adequately represented.

Targets and KPIs

The key measures for monitoring progress over the five years of this strategy are shown here. In some cases, they will require baseline data to be able to monitor progress.

Target measure	Rationale	How to measure	Suggested target by 2030
1. Economic impact	Economic impact derived from visitor spend will lead to increased prosperity, profitable businesses and jobs.	Annual Economic Impact Study	10% over rate of inflation vs baseline
2. Visitor sentiment	Tracking progress around perceptions, attitudes and satisfaction from actual visitors will help determine how the destination is seen and whether it is improving as a result of the strategy actions.	Net Promoter Score	5% over baseline
3. Visitor awareness	To track whether awareness of Winchester district among prospective visitors is improving.	Omnibus panel survey	2.5% increase in awareness over baseline
4. High value (overnight) visitors	An increase in the proportion of people staying over-night means more higher value visitors.	Annual Economic Impact Study	5% increase in overnights vs the baseline

Making it happen

The visitor economy is made up from a disparate collection of organisations which encompass the public, private and third sector. Some are large strategic bodies but there are also lots of small and medium sized enterprises. The visitor economy doesn't exist in isolation – the shops, attractions, events, restaurants and landscapes which draw in visitors also provide an important amenity for local communities. The combined buying power of residents and visitors is what sustains these visitor businesses and the jobs they create.

Because of this no one body is responsible for the visitor economy, and to ensure that Winchester district is marketed and managed in a way that will attract and delight visitors, all these different organisations have to work collaboratively. Winchester City Council has an important role as 'enabler', driving the actions in this strategy forward with the support, investment and participation of others.



Visit Winchester – which sits within Winchester City Council – provides the glue bringing different strands of activity and the visitor economy together, while representing the interests of visitors in policy and investment decisions.

In addition, with the changes taking place regionally with the establishment of the Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and Winchester LVEP, Winchester has an important role to play in positively influencing regional and national support in areas that include policy, training and funding.

Funding to support the priorities and actions in this strategy are increasingly under pressure. While this strategy sets out an ambitious pathway to prosperity, it is pragmatic in identifying actions which can be delivered from within existing budgets, which are about leveraging support and investment collectively (for example in joint marketing) and which are about influencing investment already taking place to ensure it meets the needs of the visitor economy (e.g. transport plans, major developments, private investment).



Roles and responsibilities

Greater coherence and stronger partnerships are the key to managing the visitor economy across the Winchester district and making the most of the opportunities identified in this strategy. Moreover, this strategy recognises the opportunities through working in partnership with other destinations and stakeholders across Hampshire, whose tourism assets align and complement those within Winchester district. The roles and responsibilities for all the players in the Winchester district visitor economy are illustrated here.





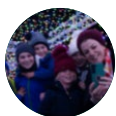
Our priorities

Setting clear priorities provides a shared direction for partners, businesses and stakeholders across the district, ensuring we focus our efforts on the areas that will have the greatest impact.

OUR PRIORITY

Visitor market focus

Domestic visitors are the priority, maintaining appeal to the established Country Loving Traditionalists, whilst introducing a sharp focus on growing visits from Curious Families and Cultural Foodie Explorers. Winchester district's product aligns with the travel motivations for these two primary growth segments which have strong potential to increase demand for accommodation supply and support increase in overnight stays and to raise destination awareness. Longer term, there is scope to attract younger Global Experience Seekers, provided enhanced public transport links, digital connectivity and an appealing evening offer are in place.



Curious Families



Cultural Foodie Explorers

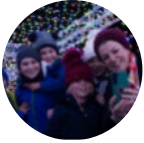


Global Experience Seekers



Country Loving Traditionalists





Curious Families

Type

Primary Growth
(Limited)

Who they are and what they want

- Families with children up to age 12
- Often multigenerational (with grandparents)
- Day trips & short breaks
- Keen to spend quality time together
- Enjoy attractions, outdoors, culture & events, learning
- Value is important but will spend on treats

Rationale

- Will spend on activities to keep children happy.
- May convert from a day visit to overnight given enough to do
- Active on social media – easy to reach; engage them as advocates)

The opportunity

- Raise profile of rounded family offer to grow destination awareness
- Build overnights via family-friendly accommodation and school holiday promotions



Cultural Foodie Explorers

Type

Primary Growth
(New)

Who they are and what they want

- Couples or groups of friends
- Aged 25 to 55, travelling without children
- Affluent professionals
- Keen on food & drink experiences, history, contemporary art, outdoor activities (gentle), independent shopping

Rationale

- High propensity to spend e.g. accommodation, meals, experiences
- Take regular breaks both city & rural
- Typically from London & South East, with easy access to Winchester district

The opportunity

- Leverage food & drink to raise awareness and appeal
- Potential to increase overnights year round
- Can help to drive a more contemporary image



Global Experience Seekers

Type

Development
(Longer term)

Who they are and what they want

- Below 40, couples or friends, without children
- UK and international
- Take city & rural breaks
- 'Only here' experiences – culture, events, learning
- Packed itineraries – daytime & evening
- Quality, varied & safe night-time offer
- Public transport & digital connectivity are vital

Rationale

- Frequent travellers who spend on unique experiences
- Active on social media – advocacy & user-generated content (UGC)
- Like to support local independents
- Champions for sustainability & inclusivity

The opportunity

- Longer-term prospect
- Year-round weekend overnights
- Can help support perception change, particularly regarding reputation for sustainability & inclusivity



Country Loving Traditionalists

Type

Maintenance
(Existing)

Who they are and what they want

- Affluent 55+, couples and groups
- Take regular UK breaks, midweek & weekend
- Enjoy heritage, landscape, local culture, particularly good food & drink
- Looking for quality accommodation
- Currently visiting from Hants, S East & London

Rationale

- Existing core market, important to maintain
- Ideal prospects for out of season travel
- Loyal audience, word of mouth effect

The opportunity

- Continue to attract not alienate
- Opportunity to encourage repeats & overnights
- Potential to increase volume of visits from existing geographies and to draw in from a wider radius

OUR PRIORITY

Positioning and destination marketing

With clarity on the target markets, Winchester district needs to be effectively positioned and marketed in order to reach, engage and attract both growth segments as well as to retain the maintenance segment.

A new narrative

To invite consideration and attract visits from the primary growth markets, visitors need to know

‘Why Winchester district’?

Refreshing and strengthening the story that the district tells about itself is vital to successfully answering this question. A contemporary destination narrative will act as the cornerstone of Winchester district’s future marketing strategy. With competition from the likes of Bath, York and Salisbury, we need to be clear about what we have to offer that is distinct and special, and to also promote our proximity to neighbouring destinations to widen our appeal, attract diverse audiences for longer.

The city is, of course, recognised for its heritage and there is potential to explore how this could be deepened and made more distinctive. However, heritage alone is not enough. To reinforce the district’s distinctiveness, the narrative positioning must embrace other key themes which have emerged during the research and consultation process. Leaning into the food and drink offer (including vineyards),

the easy access to nature (including water meadows and unique chalk landscapes) and local commitment to creating a sustainable destination will all enrich the narrative. Finally joining together the city and rural proposition, alongside products and experiences beyond the district boundary, is vital too. Presenting them together will create a sense of unity; strengthen destination appeal; and increase dwell time and spend by offering a wider range of things to do, see and experience. Wrapping these elements into a richer narrative will also support continued engagement with the Country Loving Traditionalists.

For the refreshed narrative to do its job, it must be used consistently by Visit Winchester and underpin all marketing messaging. It also needs to be shared with and adopted by stakeholders, such as Visit Hampshire, Tourism South East and Visit England, as well as local tourism providers/businesses. Visit Winchester can support this amplification by providing practical resources to encourage take up of the messaging. Over time this consistency - alongside other destination marketing activity - will cut through.



Destination marketing

The overall aim of destination marketing for Winchester district is to raise profile, shift perceptions, increase visitor numbers and maximise the value of visits, with overnight stays being a priority.

Visit Winchester leads on destination marketing and has the foundations in place, with the city council team managing various channels to market including the website, e-newsletter, social media and PR activity (outsourced to an agency). This baseline activity should continue but will need to reflect the needs and interests of the growth markets and leverage the new narrative, for example, to steer blog content themes and PR angles.

Critical to the future promotion of the district is a market-focused campaign mindset. Winchester's digital content is unlikely to make it onto the radar of the growth segments organically. Highly targeted digital advertising will be necessary, supported by wider activity such as PR and social media collaborations. Supporting imagery and video must also be carefully considered - it needs to catch the attention and encourage clickthrough. Resources are limited but prioritising targeted campaign activity will be key to growth as it will extend reach and profile in relation to best prospect markets.

VisitWinchester.co.uk will sit at the heart of all marketing activity and must be primed to meet the needs of new prospects. For example, adding an 'About Winchester' summary and a location map would be useful to those living outside the South East who are unfamiliar with the district and its geography.

Local, regional and national partners will also play a role in promoting the district to their networks. Keeping stakeholders abreast of marketing activity and offering ways to participate and support will deepen the impact. The sample campaign on the right illustrates what a campaign might look like.

Sample campaign

Winchester 3-Day Food Safari aimed at Cultural Foodie Explorers

- Create a foodie itinerary with places to visit, experience, eat, stay and shop, plus striking images. Available as web content or downloadable PDF with links.
- Target growth segment via Meta (Facebook & Instagram) paid advertising, reinforced by PR and social media partnerships e.g. Fiona Beckett. Run a competition to win a foodie stay to raise awareness and build database (GDPR compliant) e.g. with Jude's ice-cream.
- Run the content across Visit Winchester's channels, creatively using the theme e.g. short 'show & tell' reels from producers, mini vineyard tours
- Work with partners such as Visit Hampshire, Tourism South East England and Hampshire Fare plus local businesses to spread the word further e.g. links to the itinerary on their sites, social tagging/sharing.
- Evaluate performance to inform future activity e.g. understanding best performing ads in terms of both messaging and imagery.



Priority action areas: Positioning and destination marketing

There are three priority action areas for positioning and marketing:

- 👑 **Development of a refreshed destination narrative**
- 👑 **Destination promotion with a focus on targeted campaigns**
- 👑 **Engagement and partnership**

Positioning and marketing priorities	Action	Timescale	Lead
PRIORITY 1: DESTINATION NARRATIVE Develop a contemporary narrative to underpin marketing by Visit Winchester and partners, including businesses.	Commission a clear and compelling destination narrative which captures what is special about Winchester district as a place to visit. The destination narrative will be underpinned by a clear brand vision statement .	2026 – 2027	Visit Winchester
	Produce a light-touch toolkit for tourism businesses and partners with sample copy and images. Roll out via online webinars and live events.	2026 – 2027	Visit Winchester

Positioning and marketing priorities	Action	Timescale	Lead
PRIORITY 2: DESTINATION PROMOTION Proactively market to new growth segments, building on the foundational marketing activity already in place.	Draft a practical and tightly-focused Marketing Plan , allowing a minimum of one campaign per growth market. Monitor and review annually.	2027	Visit Winchester
	Thread the new narrative across Visit Winchester owned channels and review where additional info is required for growth markets, whether content related e.g. location map, family-friendly articles, or user experience related e.g. easier access to blog.	2027	Visit Winchester
	Applying a 'test and learn' approach, deliver campaign activity , working closely with PR agency and partners to amplify. Monitor closely to build understanding of the target audiences and how Winchester can best appeal.	2026 – 2027	Visit Winchester
	Continue with baseline promotion , evaluating performance to inform future activity. Ensure new content is devised with growth segments in mind and proactively promotes overnight stays e.g. a compelling 2-night itinerary for each segment.	2026 – 2027	Visit Winchester
PRIORITY 3: ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIP Act as an enabler by bringing together partners and the sector to collaborate and network. Extend reach, increase share of voice in the marketplace and secure alignment in marketing the destination by working together for the benefit of all.	Facilitate collaborative working by establishing the Winchester Attractions Group focused on networking, sharing performance data, supporting campaigns, cross-promotion and in-destination on-selling/referrals, special offers and deals.	2026	Visit Winchester & attractions
	Disseminate information on data and insights on target markets, new Marketing Plan and opportunities to get involved to tourism businesses and providers via the toolkit (above) and at ongoing networking events.	2026 – 2027	Visit Winchester & sector
	Support training needs where possible, responding to demand for help with customer services, marketing and digital skills.	2026 – 2027	Visit Winchester

OUR PRIORITY

Destination development

Winchester district has a strong visitor offer that must continue to be supported. There are however a handful of development priorities which address market opportunities, are relevant to Winchester and overcome the challenges the destination faces. These will often be medium to longer term projects given their complexity but there are short term actions that help move them forward. These projects improve competitiveness and create the capacity for growth. While an indication of resource needs is provided in the tables, it is worth noting that in many cases the costs are born through other planned or existing programmes of work (e.g. Local Transport Plan investment or private investment in accommodation development). There is however a need for the voice of visitors, through Visit Winchester, to be included in planning.

Destination development priorities	Action	Timescale	Lead
PRIORITY 1: KEEPING VISITORS FOR LONGER There is a need to help visitors understand all that the district has to offer and to recognise why they should take longer to stay and explore. Use of wayfinding, itineraries and route development to present a coherent offer will help join up the offer into a coherent package. There is a continued requirement to work with partners beyond the current district boundary to further enhance the existing offer and increase dwell time.	Develop city and district itineraries and trails (half-day, day, 24 and 48 hours) which align to thematic strengths and target market segments e.g. food and drink, active family experiences, nature and outdoors, history and heritage. Overnight itineraries to also promote evening economy offer, e.g. dark skies, theatre, food and drink. Promoted via Visit Winchester and partners and used to join up the disparate visitor attractions and experiences across the district.	2026 - 2027	Visit Winchester
	Deliver a visitor wayfinding plan, using physical and digital tools to encourage exploration and enjoyment of the city and which align to wider district development projects and the city Movement Strategy.	2026 - 2030	Winchester City Council
	Elevate awareness of the district's close connections to key destinations across Hampshire, signpost to tourism assets across the county and create seamless, cross-boundary itineraries that make sense to visitors and inspire multi-stop, multi-day journeys.	2026 - 2028	Visit Winchester, LVEP
PRIORITY 2: RURAL CONNECTIVITY Winchester is a rural district with many delightful towns and villages, attractions and experiences outside of the city, which acts as the main gateway for visitors. Actively promoting and encouraging use of rural and sustainable transport will help to meet climate change targets while supporting the viability of these services for local communities and business.	Actively promote rural transport services (mainly bus) for visitors to reach attraction and experiences. Develop itineraries which illustrate how public transport can be used. Have VIC staff experience the services first hand to help them to promote the services.	2026 - 2028	Visit Winchester, Tourism Businesses, Transport Providers
	Expand take up of Good Journey , a car-free visitor planning tool, across the destination. Use the existing assets such as Park & Ride to encourage sustainable travel choices by visitors.	2026 - 2027	Visit Winchester, Tourism Businesses
	Promote, expand and improve the active travel network across the destination, capitalising on the gateway role for the South Downs Way and existing assets such as the Clarendon Way, King Alfred's Way, St James Way and NCN23.	Ongoing	WCC, Hampshire Country Council, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, SDNP

Destination development priorities	Action	Timescale	Lead
PRIORITY 3: ACCOMMODATION DEVELOPMENT To sustainably grow the impact from tourism, Winchester will need visitors to stay longer in the district and convert more day visitors to staying visitors. Data shows Winchester hotel performance is robust, and the destination should look to add to the available supply of visitor accommodation.	Review the full diversity of accommodation provision and map to supply, need and demand, with a view to look in detail at the potential for new accommodation development, including the location and type of accommodation, potential providers/investors and to support Planning Policy decisions and private investment.	2026 - 2028	Winchester City Council and Visit Winchester
	Produce an accommodation investment prospectus and actively promote sites and investment opportunities to investors. Signpost existing business to support and advice available from the council with regards to planning (supporting applications and influencing local plan, and decision-making) funding via government grants (farm diversification). Produce an audit of available	2026 - 2028	Winchester City Council and Visit Winchester
PRIORITY 4: EVENTS WITH IMPACT In support of the Winchester District Cultural Strategy and specifically priorities around Events and Festivals, there is scope to ensure that events can grow their impact to attract and keep visitors in the district. There is already breadth to the events offer but greater potential to increase impact.	Establish a clear typology of outdoor events (Signature, Growth, Community) and criteria (impact, seasonality, quality, distinctiveness, commercial, reputation) which can be embedded within a high-level Events Strategy to guide support and investment in outdoor events. Use this to increase the impact in generating visits and visitor spend when determining which events to support.	2026-2030	Winchester City Council, Cultural Partners and Event Organisers
PRIORITY 5: EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT Winchester already has many outstanding attractions and experiences but to remain relevant to changing needs of visitors, continuous investment is needed to remain competitive. There is also potential from the development of new experiences including food and drink experiences (e.g. vineyards).	Actively support the development of food and drink experiences among producers with diversification of the offer (tours, tasting, education, retail, dining, events, weddings, accommodation) to strengthen Winchester's reputation as a foodie destination.	2026 - 2028	Visit Winchester, Hampshire Fare, Winchester City Council, TSE/ Training Provider
	Promote food and drink experiences, offering target segments a uniquely 'Winchester experience' working with businesses and major partners.	2026 - 2028	Visit Winchester, Hampshire Fare, Winchester City Council, TSE/ Training Provider
	Deliver training for tourism businesses to review and develop bookable experiences for visitors.	2026 - 2028	Visit Winchester, Hampshire Fare, Winchester City Council, TSE/ Training Provider

OUR PRIORITY

Destination management

The visitor economy is one which needs to build resilience while at the same time visitors have an expectation that the places they visit will be sustainable, accessible and inclusive. So, providing the tools to help business prosper, bringing the sector together so that all the businesses and organisations with an interest in the destination are aligned and collaborating, and having the data and insights to make informed decisions is critical.

Destination management priorities	Action	Timescale	Lead
PRIORITY 1: DATA AND INSIGHTS It is important to understand how the destination is performing and whether our actions are having a measurable impact. It is also necessary to understand our visitors and their changing habits. Disseminating data and insights among the visitor economy will help to drive improvements across the visitor economy.	Produce an annual Economic Impact Study to monitor destination performance and invest in accommodation performance data (e.g. COSTAR).	2026	Visit Winchester
	Disseminate findings among Visit Winchester members and partner organisations via a trade data hub and at regular meetings.	2026	Visit Winchester
PRIORITY 2: BUSINESS SUPPORT Great destinations are built on the experiences provided by businesses. Providing them with tools and insights which can help them plan and align their own activity to the wider destination strategy is critical. Digital portals can also signpost to wider sector support, advice and information on our markets and activity such as campaigns, PR, accessibility or sustainability.	Create an online portal and business advice hub which actively promotes and signposts to insights and data, sustainability and accessibility toolkits, networking events, funding opportunities, marketing support, information on training, events and webinars from local providers, including the emerging LVEP and VisitEngland.	2026 - 2029	Winchester City Council and Visit Winchester

Destination management priorities	Action	Timescale	Lead
PRIORITY 3: A GREAT VISITOR WELCOME The first and last impressions visitors have of a destination have a lasting impact on their overall impressions and satisfaction. There is a need to understand the current offer and take steps to improve it where possible to present a high quality welcome. While a TIC is an important tool in visitor welcome and resident inclusion, there is potential to take information to where visitors are by developing a network of Tourist Information Points in partner businesses.	Ensure all gateways provide a high quality environment and experience which enhances welcome and provides the type of information, signage, transport links, wayfinding and experience which is high quality for residents and visitors. Monitor all gateways by mode of arrival (rail, bus, car, foot, bike) to identify visitor improvements.	2025 - 2028	Winchester City Council, Winchester BID, transport and parking providers
	Develop the VIC as a hub for a wider network of Visitor Information Points at visitor businesses and explore establishing a volunteer network of Ambassadors or Greeters.	2026 onwards	Visit Winchester
	Explore opportunities to improve city dressing for major events and to enhance welcome and environment.	Ongoing	Winchester City Council, Winchester BID, Visit Winchester
PRIORITY 4: SUSTAINABILITY Tourism generates significant impacts from travel and the consumption of experiences and accommodation. The Winchester district visitor economy should support the ambitions of the council to be a carbon neutral district and the Green Economic Development Strategy to reduce the carbon impacts from tourism, strengthen local supply chains, reduce the consumption of scarce resources and support biodiversity.	Explore destination certification (Glasgow Declaration, GDS Index or Green Tourism).	2026 - 2028	Visit Winchester, LVEP, Business, Winchester BID
	Develop a focus for Winchester district businesses to undertake certification and in doing so monitor, plan and make changes which improve the destination's sustainability.	2026 - 2028	Visit Winchester, LVEP, Business, Winchester BID

Destination management priorities	Action	Timescale	Lead
PRIORITY 5: NETWORK & COLLABORATION Winchester tourism businesses and organisations highly value the opportunities which Visit Winchester provides for them to come together, to learn and collaborate. Strengthening this over the life of this strategy will help to ensure the destination grows together. It also helps the sector recognise that the delivery of the strategy requires all of them to contribute. The local authority has an important role, but this is the strategy for the district with the council as an 'enabler' rather than the default 'deliverer'.	Establish a regular calendar of business networking and member events, in collaboration with other organisations (BID, LVEP) where it makes sense. Create a thematic focus to each event so they can support strategic priorities.	Ongoing	Visit Winchester, Businesses
	Continue to use the attractions group to support itinerary development, marketing and sharing of insights.	Ongoing	Visit Winchester, Visitor Attractions
PRIORITY 6: ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION The Purple Pound (spending power of disabled people) is estimated to be valued at over £14.6bn in England alone. While there are clear benefits for visitors, an accessible and inclusive destination also provides great benefits to local communities, employees and businesses.	Signpost and provide training/ events for the sector. Increase the number of businesses making improvements with accessibility champions, accessibility guides, accessible facilities as well as dementia and autism friendly initiatives. Showcase examples of best practice from within Winchester on visitor platforms.	2026 - 2029	Visit Winchester, Business, VisitEngland, LVEP

Conclusion

This strategy maps out a pathway to greater prosperity for the visitor economy in Winchester district. It advocates for a new way of working which plays to the district's strengths and existing markets while unlocking opportunities to grow the value from visitors by targeting longer stays, including more overnight visits, and new markets which can be attracted to the Winchester district.

Developing and adding to the current offer, presenting the breadth of it as a coherent package through targeted promotion and building a case for collective investment by the whole visitor economy are not easy tasks.

But Winchester district has it all to play for. Looking at the data, it tells us there is clear 'headroom' for growth. This strategy balances ambition for the destination with a reality check about the level of available resources (money and people) to take it forward. In some situations, the opportunity is in leveraging the work and investment of others to achieve stronger outcomes for the visitor economy.

The strategy has been developed in partnership with businesses operating in the visitor economy and associated stakeholders. It belongs to all of us and we all have a responsibility to play our part in delivering it, for the benefit of all. The local authority has an important role as 'enabler' and 'convenor' of the wider industry – but there is no expectation that the strategy is for the authority to take forward on its own.

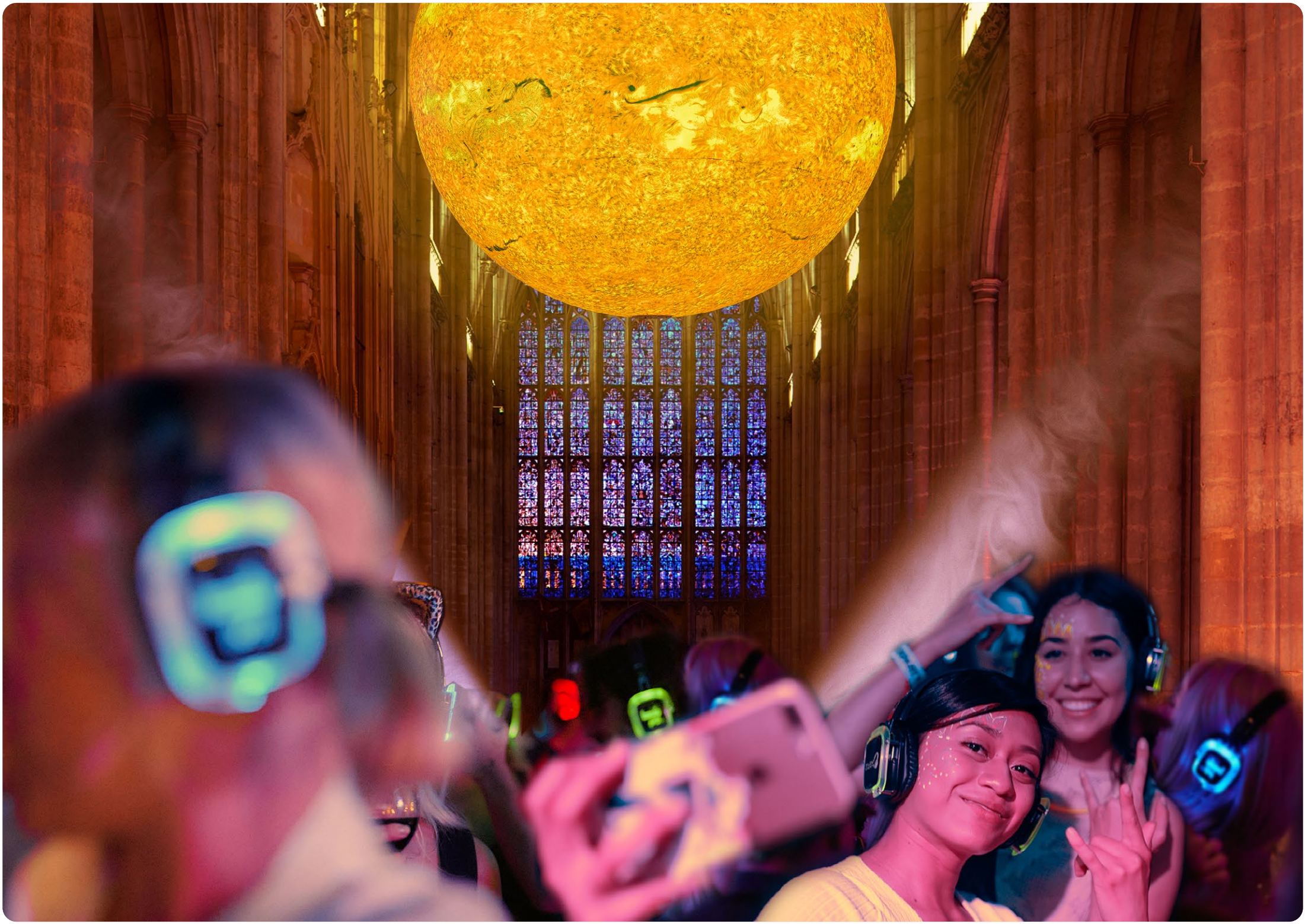
While some of the priorities and actions will take time, others can be delivered at pace as 'quick wins'. In the first 12 months of the strategy this includes:

- Market focus, positioning and toolkit
- Marketing plan and test campaigns
- Itineraries, trails and wayfinding improvements
- Improved visitor welcome
- Data and insights developed and shared
- Strengthened collaboration and networks

There are many changes taking place with regards devolution and to regional tourism structures. This strategy will enable us to positively influence these new structures and the work those new organisations will deliver. This strategy is designed to remain flexible as wider changes occur, providing strong foundations to enhance the Visit Winchester brand and position the district as a leading tourism destination in Hampshire. It aims to support sustainable, inclusive growth in the visitor economy, maintain Winchester's leadership within the regional LVEP partnership, and ensure Council ambitions align with wider regional initiatives. Overall, it establishes bold, evidence-based groundwork for future growth, collaboration, and place promotion across the South.



Winchester District invites
visitors to experience
history, culture and
countryside in a
way that is authentic,
welcoming and
sustainable.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Blue Sail and the multiple businesses and partners across Winchester district's visitor economy and across Hampshire who have supported development of this strategy.

 visitwinchester.co.uk/industry-and-trade

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