



## VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY

Buxton's cultural and heritage strength  
– an elemental approach for tourism, capitalising  
on significant heritage and tourism investment

March 2019



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**“O Buxton, far-famed for your  
hot and healing well,  
Should fortune not return me,  
nor I to thee, farewell.”**

**Mary Stuart**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BUXTON'S OPPORTUNITY – IN A NUTSHELL

Buxton is a town of considerable historic and contemporary heft, on the cusp of transformation driven by visionary ambition and major public and private sector investment into its heritage assets. It has a significant opportunity to grow its visitor economy. Its 'hardware' (built and natural environment) and 'software' (people, skills, community) are considerable.

Buxton is a heritage spa town, with a strong cultural and heritage offer, surrounded by some of England's most magnificent countryside, supported by enthusiastic volunteers, with a huge catchment area and potential market on its doorstep – a plethora of assets, for even half of which many a destination would give its eye teeth.

The challenge is to bring all this together, identify improvements needed in visitor experiences, products and events, infrastructure and access, and channel the energies so evident within the town, to coalesce behind a vision and competitive 'sense of place', for the town, thus helping it realise the potential of its visitor economy.

**This Visitor Economy Strategy and associated Destination Management Action Plan are intended to provide the strategic direction and focused activity necessary to achieve this.**

## 1.2 STRATEGIC FOCUS AND ACTION ORIENTED

1. The *Visitor Economy Strategy (VES)* is a road map for the next five years, identifying what kind of place Buxton wants to be and how it can optimise its visitor economy, through strategic priorities for the next five years.
2. The *Destination Management Action Plan (DMAP)* is a three-year action plan, which defines how Buxton can achieve these strategic objectives and how it can regularly measure progress. It proposes a set of actions with outline costings to deliver the strategic objectives (VES), with delivery targets and roles assigned. Treated as a 'live' ongoing plan, the DMAP should be updated and refocused over time and as progress is made.



## 1.3 THE WAY FORWARD

This Visitor Economy Strategy outlines a recipe for success, which includes:

- \_ Creating and uniting behind a distinctive identity and narrative for the town;
- \_ Confirming the type of tourism Buxton wants – people who will spend more and spread this spending throughout Buxton businesses. This means focusing development and marketing activities on market segments that will deliver this;
- \_ Improving the visitor infrastructure – from access and welcome through places to stay, eat, and things to do, to the public realm.

### 1.3.1 Transformative elements

To this end the Destination Management Action Plan proposes a series of actions to implement this Visitor Economy Strategy. These comprise a mix of actions aimed at delivering both transformative and incremental change. Unsurprisingly, the **Buxton Crescent & Thermal Spa project** is a huge catalysing factor behind the transformation of Buxton's visitor economy and should sit in front of any list of transformational elements.

These transformative elements address key areas for Buxton to focus on – brand, culture, place, visitor experience and leadership – all themes that run throughout this Strategy.

1. **Brand** – Buxton should be re-positioned as a gateway to the Peak District, both in terms of physical measures to link it to its hinterland, and marketing. This would convey a modern-day pattern of spa visitation with visitors taking the waters and enjoying the health benefits of the Peak District's invigorating landscapes. The town's unique characteristics of water, arts, heritage and well-being should inform a consistent narrative.
2. **Culture** – Building on the world renown of its International Festival, **collaborative year-round cultural programming** supporting ambition, creating fresh energy and bold ideas should be developed. This in turn will deliver year-round business for the town's tourism sector. The improvement of the backstage facilities to Buxton Opera House should also be pursued as a priority. This will allow an improved and expanded cultural offer to be delivered, in turn provide enhanced facilities for the Festival and increase the economic impact of the Opera House & Cinema.
3. **Place** – Whilst Buxton has wonderful cultural assets, its streetscapes, orientation and interpretive facilities require re-invigoration.
4. **Visitor Experience** – The town has an excellent reputation for volunteering and welcoming visitors. The visitor welcome, however, needs to be enhanced, as do the town's retail opportunities, accommodation and food and drink offers.
5. **Leadership** – To act as one destination, one place and one 'business'. In order to drive the delivery of this, there needs to be a new leadership entity with a clear mandate and the associated accountability for Buxton's visitor economy.



### WATER

The town's heritage flows from it, its industry is built on it, and the contemporary tourism offer can be shaped around it.

## 2. WHERE ARE WE NOW? CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### 2.1 OVERVIEW

This section is a situation analysis. It assesses the current status of Buxton's visitor economy, so that a clear idea of its assets and performance can be established and proposals for development and improvement can be made.

Buxton is at a key moment – an opportunity – for it to fulfil its potential as a tourism destination. The re-opening of the Crescent as a world class Spa and Hotel with visitor centre and visitor attraction provides the town with a wonderful opportunity to re-establish itself as a leading tourist destination. The Buxton International Festival and glorious Opera House are the corner stones of the town's reputation as an important cultural destination. Year-round programming and improvements to the Opera House's backstage facilities would further enhance its standing in this regard.

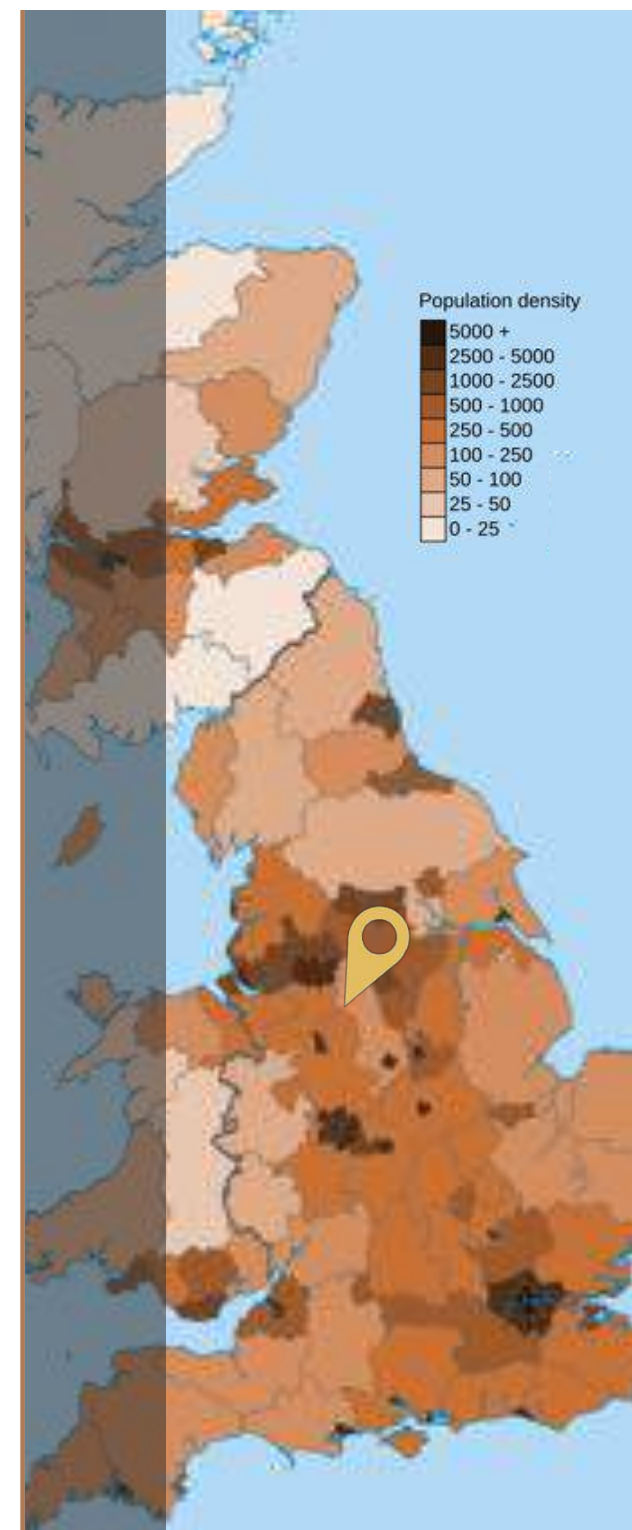
The thriving University of Derby Campus situated in the awe-inspiring Dome Building, has a leading hospitality school which will help support the town's burgeoning service economy. Whilst Buxton's undoubted appetite for volunteering will only further assist the town in its drive to welcome visitors.

However, in order to fulfil its market potential, the town as a whole must rise up to the challenge of new visitor expectations. It would benefit from a greater range of accommodation, a more distinctive retail offer, and a greater number and range of quality places to eat, as well as improved public realm.

Underpinning this is the need for the town to shake off its image of faded glory and to develop a coherent, 'stand-out' identity, which distinguishes it from its competitors as a 'must visit' destination. Culture and heritage will be at the heart of this re-positioning as will the unique character of a town forged on the restorative powers of water. Buxton can be a modern day Spa Town offering strong cultural programming and easy access to its stunning surrounding scenery.

Buxton is fortunate in its location, as a significant visitor market exists within 2-3 hours' drive, not least the population within its immediate hinterland. With almost 6 million people living in the metropolitan areas of Manchester, Sheffield and Nottingham-Derby plus, not much further afield, another c.4.5 million in the Leeds-Bradford and Liverpool city regions, this amounts to almost 20% of the English population within relatively easy access. Its proximity to Manchester Airport, particularly with the new relief road, also offers an opportunity to attract international visitors – for both leisure and conferences.

The challenge of improving physical access is clearly important. Roads into Buxton can be congested in peak periods and trains are comparatively slow and comprise older, basic rolling stock. Once here, directional and interpretive signage could be clearer and more informative within the town.



### 2.1.1 A changing world

The world of travel has changed – package tourists are increasingly replaced by independent-minded travellers. Tourists have become travellers, seeking out the bespoke, the unusual and the different in a bid to be first, immersed and local. Hotels, restaurants and high streets are eschewed in favour of street food and pop-up markets. Big tours are being replaced with smaller, personalised, 'pick 'n' mix' experiences, delivered by 'real' local people not tour operators or conspicuous tourism professionals. They accumulate experiences through a self-curated itinerary that might hop between locations over the course of their trip. And importantly, they seek quality and value, which is not necessarily luxury. How can Buxton fit into this – given the predominance of day visits and the lower value they yield?

As this generation of travellers emerges and dominates the marketplace, so their desires and the means of satisfying them also change. Any destination that wishes to compete for a share of this business has to equip itself to provide what the visitors of today and tomorrow want, and the means to engage with a destination and start their visitor journey from wherever they are. This requires looking in the mirror and undertaking an honest appraisal of the current destination experience in light of such emerging trends and against a background of how competitor destinations are gearing up to compete for these markets. Buxton can serve many markets, but merely retaining the image of sticking with traditional ones is neither desirable nor sustainable.

### 2.1.2 Strong basis for growth

Buxton has significant potential, not least in terms of its heritage tourism assets (and the town's association with Chatsworth and the Devonshires), arts & culture venues and festivals, its natural environment hinterland and location in the Peak District, the source of one of the most widely recognised water brands in the UK.

The new luxury Crescent hotel and regeneration of the thermal spa will draw a new, and higher-spending, visitor market into Buxton. This will increase demand for more and better places to eat, a calendar of things to do, an improved retail offer, and will help raise awareness of Buxton as a place to visit well beyond this niche market. But it will not be a panacea. It will take a concerted and cooperative effort to attract these new investors and visitors, not least in the off-season, and have them engage with the town and area. This is where the wider offer, notably the cultural and heritage programming, will be critical.

Buxton also has an exceptional number of organisations and initiatives, successfully staffed and run to a large extent by enthusiastic volunteers, which aim to boost the image of the town, mount events and involve the community. However, reliance on volunteer resources for the strategic development of the visitor economy is not conducive to long-term sustainability and efforts can be quite fragmented. The future of Buxton's overall visitor economy will benefit from working to a common goal.



#### CHATSWORTH

A natural and willing partner through its heritage, location, target marketing and programming.

### 2.1.3 The wraparound offer

#### 2.1.3.1 Accommodation

Given the potential arising from its gateway location for the Peak District National Park (PDNP), its heritage and cultural events, Buxton's accommodation stock seems limited in terms of bedspaces, variety and, pending new developments, higher grade hotels. This tends to be dominated by a few bigger hotels targeting quite different markets (Palace Hotel, Premier Inn, Lee Wood Hotel, Old Hall Hotel, and the new Crescent Hotel), a few smaller hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs, plus some converted heritage buildings. More bedspaces, particularly in serviced accommodation (as opposed to non-serviced – see visitor expenditure column in Staying Visitors table), will be required for Buxton to grow its visitor economy. Quality (at various price bands) and distinctiveness could be improved, with room for more of the characterful accommodation that Buxton often uses to signpost its offer.

**Capacity:** The majority – almost two thirds (61%) – of bedspaces are in non-serviced accommodation (c.1,400 beds); whereas serviced accommodation only accounts for almost one third (31%) of bedspaces (c.889 beds<sup>1</sup>). As a festival town, the accommodation for artists as well as visitors – quality and availability – is a particular consideration for Buxton, generally and at festival supply pinch-points.

**Utilisation:** Visitors staying in serviced accommodation contribute significantly more to Buxton. Although non-serviced accommodation represents two thirds of Buxton's accommodation capacity, visitors staying in serviced accommodation spend 2.5 times as much as those staying in non-serviced accommodation<sup>2</sup>. There are opportunities to increase the spend of those in non-serviced accommodation by encouraging link ups with local restaurants, chefs (and chefs in training), and pre-visit shopping services that draw on local produce and producers. Services like this already exist for the Peak District generally, which are proving popular with the self-catering market, and the opportunity which the University presents in Buxton regarding the introduction of catering services seems uniquely distinctive – from fridge-filling ready-meals, baked goods to chefs-for-hire.

<b>STAYING VISITORS</b>						
	<b>Visitor numbers</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Visitor days</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Visitor expenditure (£m)</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Serviced accommodation</b>	94,890	62.1	197,020	44.5	21.964	63.3
<b>Non-serviced accommodation</b>	23,960	15.7	165,300	37.3	8.852	25.5
<b>Staying with friends and relatives</b>	33,950	22.2	80,610	18.2	3.884	11.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>152,800</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>442,930</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: STEAM 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

### 2.1.3.2 Retail

Buxton's retail offer is in need of improvement. It is recognised that there needs to be a balance between retail provision for residents and visitors. Buxton should not be swamped with visitor-focused shops at the expense of essential products and services for local residents, but it is the quality and diversity of retail outlets in general that is identified as the issue. There is a limited number of independent or 'boutique-style' shops attractive to visitors outside the Cavendish Arcade. Finding ways to support and encourage this independent sector whilst seeking to enhance the mainstream is difficult in a conservative retail market. The main shopping street, Spring Gardens, remains a comparatively poor 'shop window' for the town, lacking energy and creativity.

However, if Buxton can capitalise on the new market and regenerated image likely to be inspired by the Crescent (new shops proposed) and Thermal Spa development, there may be an opportunity to regenerate the town centre retail offer, which will be attractive to visitors and a source of pride and service to residents.

### 2.1.3.3 Food & drink

The daytime and evening offer could be considered adequate, if not especially lively, for a town of Buxton's size, but variable visitor flows place pressures on this, both in terms of volume and the type of offer that visitors want. Traditional and contemporary cafés provide some capacity to manage this demand, although (the top of

town) location in Higher Buxton can mean that an emerging café culture is effectively hidden from the main visitor flows in the heart of town (Lower Buxton).

The evening offer, understandably, mainly reflects local market demand or the 'traditional' tourism footprint, and the combination of limited accommodation stock and subsequent overnight stay patterns have not yet driven significant development of a night-time economy and more contemporary offer. The student population should perhaps be seen more as a source of enterprise and diversification. The local area is rich in artisan makers, who could have a stronger impact on the general offer (retail, cafés etc.), and also on events.

As with accommodation, knowing when to invest is a challenge, which needs to take into account both current and anticipated future demand. There is clear evidence in many other destinations of quality throughout Britain (from Padstow to Skye) of distinctive restaurants driving new business to the destination, as well as servicing existing demand. This is particularly relevant to attracting business outside the main season, and retaining food/hospitality talent being produced from the University of Derby.

## 2.2 DESTINATION PERFORMANCE AND VALUE

A healthy mix of both staying and day visitors is key for Buxton. Currently Buxton is disproportionately dependent on day visitors in terms of both visitor numbers (90%) and expenditure (60%). But



### SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

The Peak District is so close – just a brisk walk – and the connection to a contemporary wellness/restorative narrative for Buxton can help to connect the town and country more closely.



staying visitors, unsurprisingly, spend more per visit: only 10% are staying visitors, but they spend 40% of the total visitor expenditure in Buxton<sup>3</sup>. Their contribution to supporting jobs in Buxton is, however, more even and in line with expenditure patterns, with day visitors supporting c. 40%, and staying visitors supporting c. 58%, of all employment (direct & indirect). Staying visitors spend more than twice as much as day visitors per day (£78.33 per day vs. £36.49 per day).

<sup>3</sup> Source: STEAM 2017.

ALL VISITORS						
	Visitor numbers (m)	%	Visitor expenditure (£m)	%	Employment supported (direct & indirect)	%
Day visitors	1.422	90.3	51.884	59.9	477	42.1
Staying visitors	0.153	9.7	34.700	40.1	655	57.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.575</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>86.584</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>100</b>

ALL VISITORS			
	Total spend (£m) (direct & indirect)	Visitor days (m)	Spend per day (£) (direct & indirect)
Day visitors	51.884	1.422	36.49
Staying visitors	34.700	0.443	78.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>86.584</b>	<b>1.865</b>	<b>Av. 46.43</b>



#### BUXTON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

BIF carries the Buxton brand globally, and the festival and major event offer has more to offer in terms of year-round programming and developing new audiences.

*Image: Opera 2018.  
Courtesy Richard Hubert Smith*

## 2.3 CURRENT VISITORS

Although there is no comprehensive data on visitor profiles, consultation with a wide range of Buxton tourism operators and stakeholders suggests the overnight-staying market comprises:

- \_ A healthy flow of business travellers during the week;
- \_ Short-break leisure visitors at weekends;
- \_ Some touring groups in the main season;
- \_ Cultural events and festival-goers;
- \_ Conferences and lower-spending association groups (MICE – meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions);
- \_ Outdoor and adventure incl. walkers and some cyclists;
- \_ VFR (visiting friends & relatives), notably parents to students.

The majority of leisure visitors to Buxton are day visitors, who might be described as general sightseers, plus event visitors, and some outdoor enthusiasts.

## 2.4 BUXTON'S IDENTITY

In spite of its range of visitor assets, both within the town and in its immediate hinterland, Buxton does not have a clear, competitively distinctive, stand-out identity as a visitor destination.

Although famous for its International Festival amongst a niche audience, distinguished primarily by its opera programme, and its having one of Britain's largest Fringe festivals, this does not seem to have translated widely into awareness of culture as part of Buxton's DNA, in the way that it has for Cheltenham for example.

Perhaps the more intimate, personalised experience that Buxton could deliver has yet to come to fore to set its cultural experience apart. This would tap into the town's wellbeing DNA in a way that others have not or could not. Nor does it have anything approaching the image of Bath for its architectural grandeur and heritage. To date, Buxton has not been able to capitalise on the provenance of Buxton Water, one of the most visible and widely distributed bottled waters in the UK. Again surprisingly, Buxton does not seem to have capitalised on its location in the heart of the Peak District (perhaps because it does not lie within the physical PDNP boundary).

In short, Buxton has a cluster of significant assets, which it needs to pull together into a coherent narrative to give it a distinctive identity.

It can then build a series of stories around this narrative and generate compelling messages for potential visitors. This is essential to underpin the long-term competitiveness of Buxton as a visitor destination.

Buxton's working internal articulation of a positioning statement – "*England's leading spa town*" – may be aspirational and useful from a motivational perspective to guide development but it should not be used as a consumer facing strapline. Given Bath's pre-eminence as a spa city, Buxton would lose credibility if it were used in the marketplace, it will invite negative comparisons when the eyes of the media are turned on Buxton as the Crescent and



### POOLE'S CAVERN

Both a strong fixture on the visitor 'to do' list for the area, but an interesting venue for events – festivals are starting to use local caverns for cultural happenings more, and attracting new audiences in the process.

Thermal Spa open. Comparison with other spa towns (e.g. Bath, Harrogate) is best done at a business benchmarking level to aid planning, but not in consumer-facing communications. The risk of doing so in front of consumers could be to invite them at this point to make an unnecessary and potentially unhelpful comparison between spa towns/cities and their facilities, in which Buxton might not always shine as the best. And it fails to say anything really that defines the Buxton experience.

Whilst a strapline is not necessarily needed, sharp key messages that give people reasons to visit are essential for tourism campaign activity. Far better for Buxton to identify its distinguishing characteristics and have the confidence to promote its own unique 'sense of place' without inviting potentially damaging comparisons.



#### **UNIVERSITY OF DERBY**

Could the town work with the University to create incentives – an incubator unit or local prize – to encourage new food & drink ventures/pop-ups in town centre premises? A model like this could build distinctiveness, capacity and profile over time.

# 3. WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE? THE AMBITION

## 3.1 VISION

**By 2023, Buxton will be an outstanding Spa destination. It will attract visitors year-round as its historic setting marries with its cultural power and contemporary experiences – a source of physical and mental reinvigoration and wellbeing set in a landscape of inspiration.**

This vision aims to deliver the following benefits to important and distinct groups of people:

### *Residents*

- \_ Thriving, culturally exciting town, with an attractive, diverse and growing range of quality / value places to eat, drink and enjoy life, plus good shopping and entertainment facilities;
- \_ Year-round jobs in the visitor economy and associated supply chain;
- \_ Increased demand for skills, leading to a growth in higher-waged jobs in the visitor economy supply chain, as tourism grows.

### *Visitors*

- \_ Attractive town to visit for its rich mix of appeals: grand heritage, cultural programming that grabs the attention, wellness agenda made real, a relaxed feel, and unique natural environment – a great place to visit in its own right, as well as an ideal base from which to explore the Peak District and surrounding countryside.

## 3.2 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

These priorities are expanded from the Transformative Elements set out in section 1.3.1. As many of the key issues span more than one element, the Priorities have expanded to allow for clearly defined examination and follow-through to a more detailed action plan:

1. Culture and heritage;
2. Leadership and collaboration;
3. Brand and positioning;
4. Product and service development;
5. Visitor journey;
6. Accommodation;
7. Food & drink and retail;
8. Public realm.



## 3.2 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**3.2.1 Culture and heritage** – Progressing an already strong culture and heritage offer through investment, development, and promotion for current and new target markets.

**3.2.2 Leadership and collaboration** – Increase levels of collaboration across the key players – around a shared vision and plan – with clear and mandated tourism leadership closely aligned to culture and heritage.

**3.2.3 Brand and positioning** – Create and embed a distinctive, compelling brand proposition for Buxton, using culture and heritage as key differentiators.

**3.2.4 Product and service development** – Identify and develop new products and services that would add to the offer, including developing the current range of attractions, tours, events and experiences, both consumer facing and backstage facets.

**3.2.5 Visitor journey** – Ensure an easy to access, comprehensive, consistent, year-round visitor service from planning to arrival, welcome and orientation.

**3.2.6 Accommodation** – Raise the bar on quality, increase variety of offer and manage the potential impact of short-term lets, notably through the sharing economy.

**3.2.7 Food & drink and retail** – Drive quality and a market-responsive, innovative offer, and attract / retain talent.

**3.2.8 Public realm** – Connect the town's 'enclaves' and present to fit the brand values and visitor expectations.



### 3.3 STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The following underlying strategic aims are proposed for the Buxton visitor economy, directly informed by the Strategic Priorities, and in turn informing more detailed objectives that will provide the directional thrust for the DMAP. Simply put, the aims are designed to achieve more jobs, revenue, off-season visitors and improved facilities. But 'more' needs a little more context, which the DMAP provides, applying the objectives to targeted, measurable outputs.

#### 3.3.1 Culture and heritage

To create a sustainable, engaging and distinctive year-round cultural offer that:

- \_ Benefits locals as well as attracting visitors;
- \_ Attracts and inspire investors to improve the quality of visitor products and experiences;
- \_ Creates new experiences that are based on existing assets and reflect Buxton's 'sense of place' (e.g. themed trails, guided walks, cultural events et al);
- \_ Transforms the ability of regular, new and potential visitors to find out about Buxton, plan their breaks and curate their own itineraries to make the most of their visit, through all touchpoints, from personal to digital, through integrated content management, delivery and renewal.

#### Culture and heritage objectives

1. Formalise creative programming collaborations, (e.g. Buxton Opera House and Buxton International Festival).
2. Develop culture and heritage operator management model.
3. Support the investment in BOH backstage facilities to enable larger and more diverse programming.
4. Identify potential contemporary cultural event producer partners.
5. Develop a heritage / culture-led tourism information hub.
6. Partner with Derbys. Culture, Heritage & Tourism Board.

All of the above inform the development a more coherent, year-round cultural programme.

#### 3.3.2 Leadership and collaboration

To work towards realising a singular vision that connects with the wider strategic plans for the town's culture, heritage and tourism management – notably with town, borough, county, Peak District and National Park authorities, and in turn, encouraging:

- \_ Investment in the appropriate human resources and evaluation to ensure the effective delivery of the Destination Management Action Plan;
- \_ Creative and continuous development of the offer in areas that resonate with traditional, emerging and potential markets – raising service levels across the town and developing new products across the calendar, through a centrally managed, agreed set of standards, idea generation and incentives where possible.



#### NIGHTTIME ECONOMY

The cultural programme presents enviable opportunities to open up the town further, including more overnight stays for signature events and festivals.

### Leadership and collaboration objectives

1. Set clear mid-term targets as basis for the new visitor economy shadow board, with priority stakeholders to oversee the management, delivery and renewal of the Destination Management Action Plan.
2. Fully integrate tourism planning with social and economic master plans.
3. Actively secure adoption of this Strategy across all key agencies and stakeholders.
4. Secure funding and create a leadership / management role for the visitor economy in Buxton.
5. Evolve the VES Project Group into a transitional team to oversee strategy roll-out and ongoing local engagement using a collaborative co-design model.
6. Establish 'task & finish' groups to drive recommended actions through to completion.
7. Create robust and sustainable data capture, research and evaluation model.

### 3.3.3 Brand and positioning

Position in principle and practice Buxton as both a gateway to the Peak District National Park but also a place to stay and energise through its cultural and heritage offer and environs: Buxton – Peak District town, thus:

- \_ Occupying a positive, high-profile place in the minds of target markets, operators and partners with a powerful, dynamic brand – which re-affirms its link to the Peak District offer.

- \_ Developing personality-rich, consistent and relevant messaging, using culture, heritage and wellness – as the defining position for the town. This character becomes Buxton's sense of place.

### Brand and positioning objectives

1. Develop strong cultural narrative, brand messages and a series of 'stories' – through a structured brand development process.
2. Embed Buxton's own 'sense of place', brand values and personality.
3. Improve critical skills – communications/digital, welcome, hospitality, business tourism, heritage tours, brand adoption.
4. Build continual monitoring of the quality of tourism products and services.
5. Develop and test brand offer, and market via travel trade / media trips through experience-based offer.
6. Develop marketing plan and prioritise promotional investment on specific priority target segments.

### 3.3.4 Product and service development

To increase the value of Buxton's visitor economy, ensuring Buxton remains a thriving, sustainable town, spreading the value of the visitor economy throughout the year including year-round jobs, especially in the shoulder and off-peak seasons.



### DEVONSHIRE SPA

Spa treatments are already an established part of the offer, supported further by the University of Derby's Spa Management degree courses.

The Devonshire Spa was named a regional winner for best Luxury Emerging Spa in Northern Europe, at the prestigious World Luxury Spa Awards 2017.

#### Product and service development objectives

1. Explore options to develop the wellbeing market offer.
2. Develop niche opportunities in the business tourism conference market.
3. Develop new downloadable self-guided trails of/to/through Buxton.
4. Develop new cultural heritage walking & cycling trails of / to / through Buxton.
5. Enhance links with Nestlé / Buxton Water with a view to a creative corporate relationship.
6. Support the Pump Room to develop its full potential as a visitor gateway experience.

#### 3.3.5 Visitor journey

To work to create a coherent, welcoming, market-appropriate and flexible mix of information and content across all visitor touchpoints, to build visitor awareness and loyalty, driving engagement, propensity to visit and an 'ambassador' culture over time.

#### Visitor journey objectives

1. Advocate to improve rail experience: rolling stock, regularity of service, arrival.
2. Review, update and start implementation of Wayfinding Strategy in Buxton, inc. interpreting significant sites.
3. Ensure a dynamic, optimised, easily navigable website hub for Buxton, connecting to other platforms and opportunities to share content and capture support.

4. Identify and pursue technology and skills needs.
5. Take a town-wide approach to transforming and producing visitor content.

#### 3.3.6 Accommodation

To encourage a balanced, diverse mix of quality accommodation that serves changing visitor markets, encouraging year-round visits – building a reliable, resilient and high-quality permanent and seasonal hospitality offer and workforce that has, and can develop, the skills and product necessary to serve an ever-more demanding market.

#### Accommodation objectives

1. Provide quality improvement and business development advice regarding existing schemes and peer support.
2. Seek to attract new hotel investors to Buxton.
3. Launch the new The Buxton Crescent & Thermal Spa Hotel.
4. Improve the quality of Buxton's serviced accommodation.
5. Monitor the impact of short-term lets of non-serviced accommodation on the local housing market, notably Airbnb.
6. Develop training partnerships to up-skill the workforce and encourage the retention of hospitality students.

#### 3.3.7 Food & drink and retail

To encourage a balanced, diverse, resilient mix of quality food & drink and retail that serves changing visitor markets, encouraging year-round visits, including building reliable and high-quality



#### BEYOND THE SUMMER

Off season does not of course mean a closed season. Through creative and well targeted product development and event programming, an off peak offer can grow. Buxton's particular local climate is a further incentive to pursue this goal.



permanent and seasonal hospitality offer and workforce that has, and can develop, the skills and product necessary to serve an ever-more demanding market.

#### Food & drink and retail objectives

1. Seek ways to encourage culinary innovation to boost the evening economy.
2. Provide quality improvement and business development advice regarding existing schemes and peer support.
3. Stage networking events for food businesses.
4. Support efforts to attract new and diverse retail outlets to Buxton.
5. Monitor balance between shops serving visitors' and residents' needs.
6. Develop 'pop-up' vacant retail spaces policy.
7. Identify and develop entrepreneurial opportunities and training partnerships to up-skill the workforce and encourage the retention of hospitality students, notably working with the University of Derby.

#### 3.3.8 Public realm

To work towards a town-wide approach to product and service development, interpretation and information, and programming.

#### Public realm objectives

1. Explore options for visitor-focused active volunteer programme, with particular focus on public realm improvements.

2. Reflect elements of Buxton brand narrative as extensively as possible in public realm developments, signage etc.
3. Design and erect welcome signage/dressing at key arrival and dwell points.
4. Maintain visual appeal and minimise degradation of the natural and built environment.
5. Build in 'water' led elements to public realm planning.

These ambitious strategic aims and objectives provide the overarching route map for Buxton. In order to be in a position to deliver, a comprehensive and coordinated delivery programme is required – the Destination Management Action Plan.

Projected growth in visitor economy jobs is based on the following assumptions – that the targets outlined in the DMAP are achieved, including:

- c. 300 new bedspaces/3 new hotels (incl. The Buxton Crescent & Thermal Spa Hotel @ 80 rooms/160 bedspaces and 2 new hotels @ c. 25 rooms/50 bedspaces each);
- Serviced accommodation operates @ 75% occupancy p.a.;
- The Buxton Crescent & Thermal Spa Hotel opens in autumn 2019 = 2-3 months of operation in 2019. The forecasts were originally based on 3-4 months of trading in the 2019 calendar year.



#### CAVENDISH ARCADE

The retail offer has some quality, but is split across various points in the town that many visitors will not search out.

## 4. HOW DO WE GET THERE? THE ROUTEMAP

This section places the strategic priorities in the context of the Buxton brand.

### 4.1 BRINGING BUXTON'S IDENTITY TO LIFE

#### 4.1.1 The need for a coherent identity

Buxton's significant set of visitor assets can combine to give the tourism narrative a distinctive identity, supporting a series of stories (to tell relentlessly) and compelling messages for potential visitors.

Over time, this will engender a coherent identity for the town, creating 'stand out' in the fiercely competitive visitor marketplace. And, by providing a clear set of narratives for everyone to use – across all media and visitor touchpoints – their repetition will add to a cumulative (and affordable) marketing buzz about Buxton.

#### 4.1.2 Narrative

A series of interconnected narrative streams will help define the essence of Buxton's character. These need to be selective and specific in constructing a distinctive competitive identity. Narrative elements can be applied through a brand development framework into a visual and verbal brand language (but not a logo or strapline).

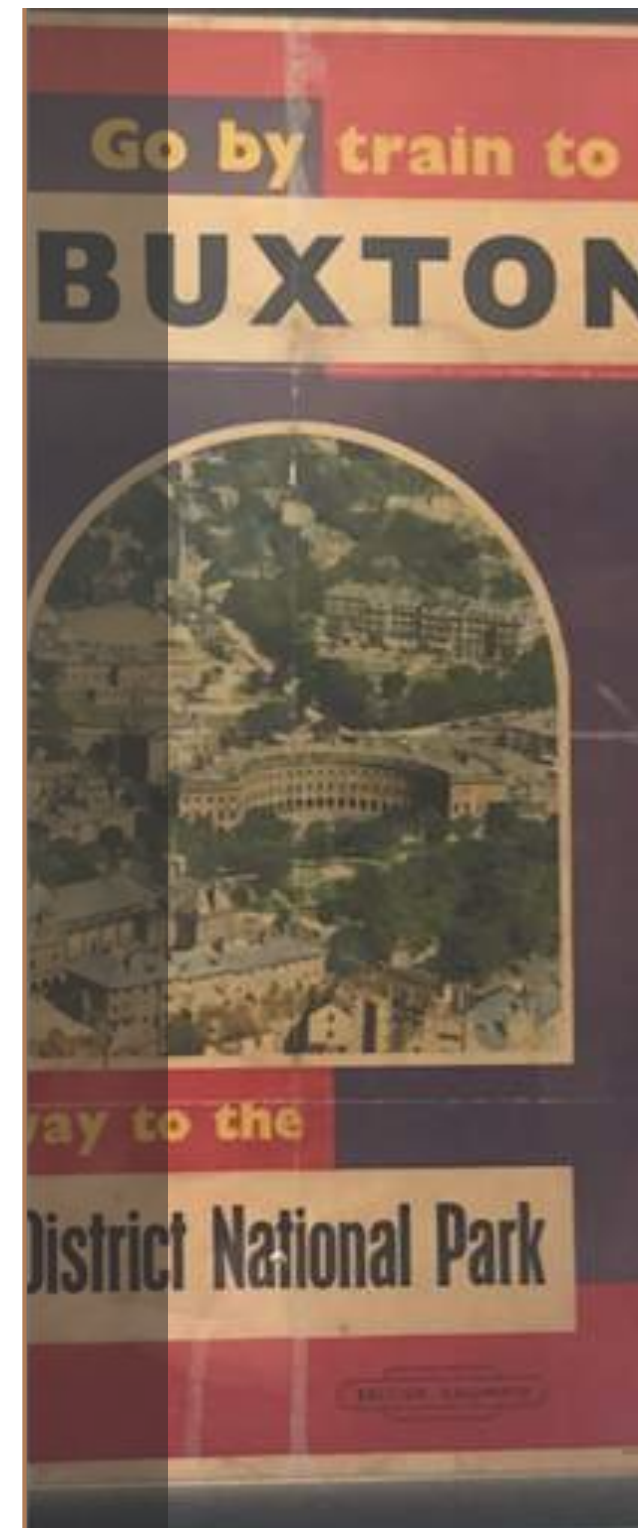
To this end, we have defined five 'narrative hooks' (for ease of recall, these can be stated mnemonically as **WAWAH**):

- **Water** (the *natural, life-giving* anchor – alongside stone – responsible for the town's creation);

- **Arts** (the *culture and heritage*, events and festivals that animate the town with a strong personality);
- **Wellbeing** (the physical and mental *tonic* that the waters and surrounding natural environment provide for visitors, whether tranquil or more socially active);
- **Activity** (connecting with the great *outdoors* – walking, cycling, climbing, exploring and generally building up an appetite);
- **Heritage** (the *DNA*, which connects all of Buxton, both in terms of its physical history and contemporary appeal).

#### 4.1.3 Implementation – the Buxton way

The combination of these five physical narrative hooks, the emotional associations and visitor benefits are the basis for Buxton's competitive identity. Talking about Buxton using its narrative hooks and imbuing such stories and marketing communications with one or more of the emotional feelings associated with Buxton, will help create an understanding amongst potential visitors of what makes Buxton different and, therefore, worth visiting.



# 5. HOW DO WE KNOW WHEN WE'RE SUCCESSFUL? THE RESULT

## 5.1 PROGRESSIVE FOCUS

The focus in Year 1 is on getting the DMAP up and running, in part by successfully establishing strategic oversight (e.g. a Shadow Board) and supporting marketing and branding. The focus in Year 2 will be very much about implementing policies and plans developed in Year 1, and building on activities undertaken in Year 1. The focus in Year 3 will be on continuing and consolidating activities undertaken in Years 1 and 2.

As lessons are learnt from undertaking activities in Years 1 and 2, and new circumstances and opportunities emerge, proposed DMAP activities should be reviewed and refined. Therefore, in light of these potential new circumstances, DMAP activities in Year 3 are likely to change considerably from those proposed at the start of this process. Nevertheless, as a basis for Year 3, the following actions are proposed, which represent a continuation of activities begun in Year 1 and pursued in Year 2.

Progression will be achieved over time by following, and updating, the DMAP – connecting strategy to delivery. At this stage of development – collaboration, resourcing and available data - some of the measures will necessarily be reviewed and made more specific and quantified over time, as the visitor economy partnership and officers establish themselves, and DMAP activity itself generates useful research insight and data.

## 5.2 KEY TO DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

VES	Visitor Economy Strategy
CHAR	Cultural Heritage Assets Review
DMAP	Destination Management Action Plan
UoD	University of Derby
BCHT	Buxton Crescent Heritage Trust
BCHTS	The Buxton Crescent & Thermal Spa Hotel
BOH	Buxton Opera House
BIF	Buxton International Festival
BFF	Buxton Festival Fringe
MPD&D	Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire
HPBC	High Peak Borough Council
DCC	Derbyshire County Council
DCHTB	Derbyshire Culture Heritage & Tourism Board
D2N2	D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership
PDNP	Peak District National Park
VB	Vision Buxton
EB	Explore Buxton
BTT	Buxton Town Team
NWUK	Nestlé Waters UK Ltd.



### 5.3 DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

YEAR 1 (2019)					
PRIORITY 1: CULTURE & HERITAGE – INVEST IN, DEVELOP AND PROMOTE AN ALREADY STRONG CULTURE & HERITAGE OFFER FOR ITS CURRENT & NEW TARGET MARKETS					
Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
Formalise <b>creative programming collaborations</b> , (e.g. BOH and BIF)	Follow through the process set out in the recent cultural heritage assets review.	HPBC / BCHT, DCC, BOH, BIF, MPD&D	TBA	2019, ongoing	Shared programme planning and delivery
Develop culture and heritage operator <b>management model</b>	Follow through the process set out in the recent cultural heritage assets review.	HPBC / BCHT, DCC, BOH, BIF, MPD&D	N/A planning	2019	New management model and governance / legal status established
Support the investment in <b>BOH backstage</b> to enable larger and more diverse programming	Drive agenda through planning and management	BOH / HPBC, VES lead (new post)	TBA	2019-21	Expanded staging capability impacting new programming and creative partners
Identify potential <b>event producer</b> partners	Liaise with BOH, BIF, BFF to build target database; invite around 'think tank' summit / round table	VES lead (new post) / cultural stakeholders, task & finish group	Est. £2-3k	2019	Outputs of summit should be actionable; new partners secured
Develop a heritage/culture-led <b>tourism information hub</b>	Sense check / support / advise existing TIC plans for Pump Room	BCHT / VES lead (new post), task & finish group	N/A	2019, ongoing	As part of digital and brand reviews
Partner with Derbys. <b>Culture, Heritage &amp; Tourism Board</b>	Confirm participation and means of reporting / dissemination / agenda-setting	VES lead (new post) / HPBC, DCC, BCHT	TBA	2019, ongoing	Increased level of market knowledge; roles in county-wide initiatives

**YEAR 1 (2019)**

**PRIORITY 2: LEADERSHIP & COLLABORATION – FOR STIMULATING FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, PARTNERSHIP PRACTICE AND MONITORING AROUND A SHARED CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM VISION AND PLAN**

Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
<p>Set clear mid-term targets as basis for the new visitor economy <b>shadow board</b>, with priority stakeholders to oversee the management, delivery and renewal of the Destination Management Action Plan.</p> <p><i>Note on visitor economy measures – longer-term (2023), Buxton baseline (2017):</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Value is measured by direct and indirect spend / output, using STEAM 2017 figures at 2017 prices.</li> <li>2. This value includes both direct and indirect expenditure at 2017 prices.</li> <li>3. Includes direct and indirect employment.</li> </ol>	<p>Recruit the new mix of lead partners; set terms of reference and clear roles &amp; responsibilities; progress funding bids and secure existing budgets; secure interim marketing activity / lead officer; fully define VES lead officer role and schedule 2020 recruitment programme</p>	<p>VES Transitional Team / Shadow board</p>	<p>Subject to Future High Street Fund, English Heritage and other sources</p>	<p>Review end 2019 / 2020.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grow value by 35% to £117m, from £87m.</li> <li>2. Increase Oct-Apr value by 40% to £43m, from £31m.</li> <li>3. Grow employment in visitor economy by 24% to 1,407 jobs, (+275 new jobs).</li> </ol>
<p>Fully <b>integrate tourism planning</b> with social and economic master plans</p>	<p>Audit policies / strategies to ensure Buxton visitor economy agenda is fully incorporated &amp; represented</p>	<p>VES Transitional Team / MPD&amp;D, DCC, DCHTB</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Autumn 2019</p>	<p>Buxton embedded in key regional strategies</p>
<p>Actively secure <b>adoption of this Strategy</b> across all key agencies and stakeholders</p>	<p>Launch and maintain advocacy programme</p>	<p>VES Transitional Team</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Autumn 2019</p>	<p>VES adopted by all major stakeholders. Media, corporate, group and social media response</p>
<p>Secure funding and create a <b>leadership / management role</b> for the visitor economy in Buxton</p>	<p>Secure funding / resource; recruit / assign role; appoint members of transitional team; set terms and first phase targets</p>	<p>VES Transitional Team / MPD&amp;D, officer and other representational stakeholders</p>	<p>TBA, est. £30-35k pa</p>	<p>For financial year 2019/2020</p>	<p>Board, then post-holder in place and operational, within management model &amp; support; clearly defined role</p>

YEAR 1 (2019)					
PRIORITY 2: LEADERSHIP & COLLABORATION – FOR STIMULATING FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, PARTNERSHIP PRACTICE AND MONITORING AROUND A SHARED CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM VISION AND PLAN					
Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
Establish <b>'task &amp; finish' groups</b> to drive recommended actions through to completion	Identify topics for 'task and finish' groups to address and appoint appropriate people	VES Transitional Team / officer and other representational stakeholders	N/A	TBA, from transitional team	Groups in place and active; set terms and roles; tasks clear, timed and monitored
Create robust and sustainable <b>data capture, research and evaluation</b> model	Audit all data / research to build digest; adjust metrics to fit wider methodologies; cost infrastructure needs	VES lead (new post) / local stakeholders	N/A in development	2019	New data capture and data sharing processes in place; better reporting

YEAR 1 (2019)					
PRIORITY 3: BRAND & POSITIONING – CREATE AND EMBED A BRAND PROPOSITION, USING CULTURE AND HERITAGE AS KEY DIFFERENTIATORS, TO TELL A DISTINCTIVE, COMPELLING BUXTON STORY					
Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
Develop strong cultural narrative, brand messages and a series of 'stories' – through a structured <b>brand development process</b>	Develop min. 3 generic stories per feature, inc. connected stories	VES lead (new post) / task & finish group / local stakeholders	Within brand development process (see below)	May 2019	Stories developed, integrated into brand guides, start to be used by agencies, partners and local stakeholders
Embed Buxton's own <b>'sense of place'</b> , brand values and personality	Develop marketing plan, set resources; prepare online brand narrative guide; assess copywriting needs to kickstart	VES lead (new post) / task & finish group	TBA est. £10-15k (brand guide, copywriting base)	June 2019	Agreed marketing plans and brand guide (inc. visual & verbal assets) in place and adopted

**YEAR 1 (2019)**

**PRIORITY 3: BRAND & POSITIONING – CREATE AND EMBED A BRAND PROPOSITION, USING CULTURE AND HERITAGE AS KEY DIFFERENTIATORS, TO TELL A DISTINCTIVE, COMPELLING BUXTON STORY**

Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
Improve <b>critical skills</b> – communications / digital, welcome, hospitality, business tourism, heritage tours, brand adoption etc.	Stakeholder training workshops, toolkits/guide developed; regular stakeholder communications established	VES lead (new post) / task & finish group	TBA, costs included in previous point, plus training, est. £5-10k	2019	Brand approach adoption; annual survey and review of standards, innovation
Build <b>continual monitoring</b> of the quality of tourism products and services	Set up VES monitoring and control model, including data and research framework	Task & finish group / VES lead (new post) , HPBC, MPD&D	N/A	2019	Annual review/report
<b>Develop and test brand and product offer</b> , and market through travel trade / media trips	Programme, schedule and invite limited target media / trade, linked to MPD&D activity.	VES lead (new post), MPD&D, HPBC, DCHTB	TBA est. £3-5k pa	2019, ongoing	Media features; planned future trips; no. of media / tour operators hosted; no. of tour programmes including Buxton
<b>Develop marketing plan and prioritise promotional investment</b> on specific priority target segments	Create a VES formative evaluation model	VES lead (new post) / HPBC, MPD&D	N/A	June 2019	Marketing plan in place; model approved, in use; decision-making records to review

**YEAR 1 (2019)**

**PRIORITY 4: PRODUCT & SERVICE DEVELOPMENT – NEW PRODUCTS & SERVICES, INC. DEVELOPING THE CURRENT RANGE OF ATTRACTIONS, TOURS, EXPERIENCES, EVENTS**

Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
Explore options to develop the <b>wellbeing market offer</b>	Identify and develop creative packages that connect the commercial operators to the town and hinterland; market test	VES lead (new post), BCTSH, BCHT / task & finish group, local stakeholders	N/A	End 2019	Visitor nights and package bookings; number of partners engaging with markets
Develop niche opportunities in the <b>business tourism conference market</b>	Identify, target and develop sectoral packages that connect the commercial operators to the town; market test	VES lead (new post) / local stakeholders (inc. hotels, university)	N/A	End 2019	Corporate event bookings; number of venues engaging with markets
Develop new downloadable <b>self-guided trails</b> of/to/through Buxton	Identify narrative routes; develop content; establish 'task & finish' group, supported by marketing resource	VES lead (new post) / task & finish group, local stakeholders	Est. £5-10k pa	2019, ongoing	User volume on new trail product; reviews; bookable product / on sales conversion
Develop new cultural heritage <b>walking &amp; cycling trails</b> of/to/through Buxton	Identify potential cycle / hiking routes link to PDNP; planning (consults, content, infrastructure, comms etc.)	VES lead (new post) / task & finish group, local stakeholders	N/A initially	End 2019	Routes identified and next stage development planning in place
Enhance <b>links with Nestlé / Buxton Water</b> with a view to a creative corporate relationship.	Review new BCTSHT partnership agreement to map next phase opportunities	BCHT / VES transition team	N/A initially	2019, ongoing	Successful roll-out of partnership; new / extension activities
Support the Pump Room to develop its full potential as a <b>visitor gateway experience</b>	Review plans in context of local partners to support programme and visitor welcome/offer	BCHT / VES transition team, VES lead (new post), task & finish group	N/A	2019, ongoing	TIC online, on-site and programmed event traffic; qualitative ratings



**YEAR 1 (2019)**

**PRIORITY 5: VISITOR JOURNEY – ENSURE AN EASY-TO-ACCESS, COMPREHENSIVE, CONSISTENT, YEAR-ROUND VISITOR SERVICE... FROM PLANNING TO ARRIVAL, WELCOME AND ORIENTATION, TO POST-VISIT**

Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
Advocate to improve <b>rail experience</b> : rolling stock, regularity of service, arrival	Meet with Northern Rail to explore opportunities	HPBC / VES lead (new post), local stakeholders	N/A	End 2019	Clear sense of commercially realistic e.g. reducing journey time, investment plans, route / stations branding etc.
Review, update and start implementation of <b>Wayfinding Strategy</b> in Buxton, inc. interpreting significant sites	Develop brief and commission study to map and recommend town-wide schema; cost and begin fundraising	HPBC / VES lead (new post)	TBA	June 2019	Turnkey brief ready to commission comprehensive updated scheme, with removal of redundant signage collateral
Ensure a dynamic, optimised, easily navigable <b>website hub for Buxton</b>	Develop branded content, architecture (building on visitbuxton) for a new tourism platform suite	VES lead (new post), task & finish group, VB / HPBD, MPD&D, EB	Est. £20-30k	End 2019	All new visit Buxton platform live and integrated to partner platforms
Identify and pursue <b>technology and skills</b> needs	Conduct a digital audit of capacity, capability and set against market needs	VES lead (new post) / HPBC, task & finish group	Est. £10k	End 2019	Actioned and funded recommendations from audit
Take a town-wide approach to transforming and producing visitor <b>content</b>	Develop a town-wide (and PDNP connected) content editorial plan	VES lead (new post) / MPD&D, task & finish group	N/A planning	June 2019	Content editorial plan adopted; increase in online (inc. brand compliant third-party platform) traffic and conversion

YEAR 1 (2019)

PRIORITY 6: ACCOMMODATION & HOSPITALITY – RAISE THE BAR ON QUALITY, INCREASE VARIETY OF OFFER, AND MANAGE THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM LETS

Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
Provide quality improvement and <b>business development advice</b> regarding existing schemes and peer support.	Identify interested businesses; develop scheduled plan	VES lead (new post) / task & finish group, HPDC, D2N2, local stakeholders	TBA	2019, ongoing	Plan, start projects and put monitoring in place
Seek to <b>attract new hotel investors</b> to Buxton	Identify 3 potential new hotel investors (boutique, independent, mid-range)	VES Transitional Team / task & finish group, HPBC, MPD&D	N/A	End 2019	Longlist targets identified, with initial assessment; 2023 targets – c.300 new bedspaces / 3 new hotels (including The Buxton Crescent & Thermal Spa Hotel @80 rooms / 160 bedspaces and 2 new hotels @c.25 rooms / 50 bedspaces each
Launch new <b>The Buxton Crescent &amp; Thermal Spa Hotel</b>	Luxury 80-bed resort hotel open	Danubius Hotels / BCHTS	N/A (secured)	2019 TBA	On target launch; Year 1 trading performance data, reviews etc.
Improve the quality of Buxton's <b>serviced accommodation</b>	Promote participation in existing quality assurance (QA) schemes by serviced accommodation providers pa. Establish an accommodation network to promote benchmarking, and peer support	VES lead (new post) / local stakeholders, HPBC, D2N2	Nominal	2019 TBA	Programme participation levels up over 10% in first year, and successive two years; Accommodation network for town fully established

YEAR 1 (2019)					
PRIORITY 6: ACCOMMODATION & HOSPITALITY – RAISE THE BAR ON QUALITY, INCREASE VARIETY OF OFFER, AND MANAGE THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM LETS					
Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
Monitor the impact of <b>short-term lets</b> of non-serviced accommodation on the local housing market, notably Airbnb	Identify number / scale of short-term lets of non-serviced accommodation in Buxton; Assess potential housing market impact and take any necessary steps to mitigate (e.g. min. no. of days)	VES lead (new post) / HPBC	N/A	2019	Inventory of short-term lets up-to-date; policy developed on short-term lets
Develop <b>training partnerships</b> to up-skill the workforce and encourage the retention of hospitality students.	Formerly progress discussions with University of Derby; explore updating / adapting current training modules	VES Transitional Team / VES lead (new post)	N/A	2019-20	New training products piloted

YEAR 1 (2019)					
PRIORITY 7: FOOD & DRINK, AND RETAIL – DRIVE QUALITY AND A MARKET-RESPONSIVE, INNOVATIVE OFFER, AND ATTRACT/RETAIN TALENT					
Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
Seek ways to <b>encourage culinary innovation</b> to boost the evening economy	UoD explore possibilities with local businesses, landlords; stage pilot event	VES lead (new post) / task & finish group, UoD, HPDC, local stakeholders	TBA	2019 TBA	Identified opportunities; develop programmes accordingly; attract 5 businesses and 1-2k consumers to pilot
Provide quality improvement and business <b>development advice</b> regarding existing schemes and peer support	Identify interested businesses; develop scheduled plan	VES lead (new post) / task & finish group, HPDC, D2N2, local stakeholders	TBA	2019, ongoing	Plan, start projects and put monitoring in place

YEAR 1 (2019)

PRIORITY 7: FOOD & DRINK, AND RETAIL – DRIVE QUALITY AND A MARKET-RESPONSIVE, INNOVATIVE OFFER, AND ATTRACT/RETAIN TALENT

Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
Stage <b>networking events for food businesses</b>	Monitor opportunities; stage two events	VES lead (new post) / local stakeholders	TBA, est. £1.5-3k	2019 TBA	Stage pilot event and inform follow-up event; Attract 25 businesses to pilot
Support efforts to attract <b>new and diverse retail outlets</b> to Buxton	Monitor opportunities	VES lead (new post) / task & finish group / HPBC	N/A	2019 TBA	Up-to-date intell on opportunities & trends; 2023 targets – 5 new restaurants / bistros / cafes adding a different, distinctive quality to the Buxton food offer; 5 new independent / boutique-style shops
Monitor <b>balance between shops</b> serving visitors' and residents' needs	Assess visitor demand, perceptions and behaviour; engage major retail landlords and create conditions to ensure sustainability of shops to serve residents' needs	HPBC / Task & finish group, VES lead (new post), local stakeholders	N/A	2019 TBA	Performance data and qualitative responses (survey); raised awareness – develop policy if required
Develop ' <b>pop-up</b> ' <b>vacant retail spaces</b> policy	Assess vacancy rates, gather best practice	HPBC / Task & finish group, VES lead (new post), local stakeholders	Direct N/A, subject to project / partners	2019 TBA	Policy in place; no/much reduced vacant retail spaces in town centre
Identify and develop <b>entrepreneurial opportunities</b> and <b>training partnerships</b> to up-skill the workforce and encourage the retention of hospitality students, notably working with the University of Derby.	Develop discussions including with University of Derby; explore updating / adapting current training modules; support retail strategy development	VES Transitional Team / VES lead (new post)	N/A	2019-20	New training products piloted; successful Future High Street Fund bid

**YEAR 1 (2019)**

**PRIORITY 8: PUBLIC REALM – CONNECT AND PRESENT THE TOWN'S 'ENCLAVES' TO FIT BRAND VALUES AND MEET VISITOR EXPECTATIONS, MAKING BUXTON ACCESSIBLE, LEGIBLE AND ATTRACTIVE THROUGH ITS PUBLIC SPACES AND SIGNAGE**

Target	Action	Lead / support	Investment/ funding required	Deadline/ milestone	Evaluation measure
Explore options for visitor-focused <b>active volunteer programme</b> , with particular focus on public realm improvements	Research and consult destination volunteer programme models; assess capacity and capability needs to target gaps; develop Buxton model	VES lead (new post), task & finish group / BTT, VB, local stakeholders	N/A planning, est. £2-5k pa operational	2019, ongoing	Recruitment, retention, volunteer surveys, development of volunteer packages and scope of works
Reflect elements of Buxton brand narrative as extensively as possible in <b>public realm developments</b> , signage etc.	Identify pipeline projects; brief / engage project planning officers; assess proposed public realm projects (dressing, planting, street art, lighting, signage, interpretation, furniture etc.)	VES lead (new post) / HPBC	N/A	2019, ongoing	Narrative guidance incorporated in all new public realm plans
Design and erect <b>welcome signage/dressing</b> at key arrival and dwell points	Commission design team to develop visual scheme options (e.g. A6, A515, A53, A5004, transport gateways);	HPBC / VES lead (new post), task & finish group	TBA	2019 planning	Uprated scheme in place, with removal of redundant signage collateral
Maintain <b>visual appeal and minimise degradation</b> of the natural and built environment	Audit townscape, responsible agencies	VES lead (new post) / task & finish group, HPBC	N/A	2019	Projects in pipeline / underway
Build in <b>'water' led elements</b> to public realm planning	Develop a plan to identify opportunities for reinforcing and projecting Buxton's brand image	HPBC, VES lead (new post) / task & finish group	TBA	2019 planning	Integrated scheme in place, with some key site ideas available for consultations

## YEARS 2-3 SUMMARY

	2020				2021			
	Develop	Continue	Review	Implement	Develop	Continue	Review	Implement
<b>PRIORITY 1: CULTURE &amp; HERITAGE</b>								
Formalise creative programming collaborations, (e.g. BOH and BIF)								
Develop culture and heritage operator management model								
Support the investment in BOH backstage								
Identify potential event producer partners								
Develop a heritage/culture-led tourism information hub								
Partner with Derbys. Culture, Heritage & Tourism Board								
<b>PRIORITY 2: LEADERSHIP &amp; COLLABORATION</b>								
Set clear mid-term targets as basis for shadow board function								
Fully integrate tourism planning with social & economic master plans								
Actively secure adoption of Strategy across agencies / stakeholders								
Secure funding and create a leadership / management role								
Establish 'task & finish' groups to drive actions								
Create robust, sustainable data capture, research & evaluation model								
<b>PRIORITY 3: BRAND &amp; POSITIONING</b>								
Undertake a visitor brand development process								
Embed Buxton's own 'sense of place', brand values and personality								
Improve critical skills								
Build continual monitoring of the quality of tourism products & services								
Develop / test brand & product offer; market through travel trade								
Prioritise promotional investment on specific priority target segments								
<b>PRIORITY 4: PRODUCT &amp; SERVICE DEVELOPMENT</b>								
Explore options to develop the wellbeing market offer								
Develop niche opportunities in the business tourism conference market								
Develop new downloadable self-guided trails								
Develop new cultural heritage walking & cycling trails								
Enhance relationship with Nestlé								
Support the Pump Room to develop as a visitor gateway experience								

**YEARS 2-3 SUMMARY**

	2020				2021			
	Develop	Continue	Review	Implement	Develop	Continue	Review	Implement
<b>PRIORITY 5: VISITOR JOURNEY</b>								
Advocate to improve rail experience								
Review, update and start implementing of Wayfinding Strategy								
Ensure a dynamic, optimised, easily navigable website hub for Buxton								
Identify and pursue technology and skills needs								
Take a town-wide approach to transforming visitor content								
<b>PRIORITY 6: ACCOMMODATION &amp; HOSPITALITY</b>								
Provide quality improvement and business development advice								
Seek to attract new hotel investors to Buxton								
Launch the new Buxton Crescent Thermal Spa Hotel								
Improve the quality of Buxton's serviced accommodation								
Monitor the impact of short-term lets of non-serviced accommodation								
Develop training partnerships to up-skill the workforce								
<b>PRIORITY 7: FOOD &amp; DRINK, AND RETAIL</b>								
Seek ways to encourage culinary innovation to boost evening economy								
Provide quality improvement and business development advice								
Stage networking events for food businesses								
Support efforts to attract new and diverse retail outlets to Buxton								
Monitor balance between shops serving visitors' and residents' needs								
Develop 'pop-up' vacant retail spaces policy								
Identify / develop entrepreneurial opportunities and training partnerships								
<b>PRIORITY 8: PUBLIC REALM</b>								
Explore options for visitor-focused active volunteer/team								
Reflect elements of brand narrative in public realm developments								
Design and erect welcome signage/dressing at key arrival points								
Maintain visual appeal of natural / built environment								
Build in 'water' led elements to public realm planning								

Commissioned  
in partnership by



Produced by

