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VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

HUB INVESTMENT APPENDIX

TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH VISIT. SLEEP. CYCLE. REPEAT DESTINATION PLAN

REPORT FOR
NORTH DERBYSHIRE/ NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE VISITOR ECONOMY CONSORTIUM

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1 HUBS

In Stage One cycling-led hubs were identified as an important way to make cycling opportunities more visible to visitors, create a stronger visitor destination and enable and encourage visitors to go cycling. Hubs are an important focus for investment because they:

- ▶ Deliver a critical mass of product in one location, creating stronger and new mini-destinations that can be taken to market in a coordinated way
- ▶ Deliver a concentration of complementary business activity strengthening commercial sustainability for small businesses through increased footfall
- ▶ Capitalise on the investment that has been made and is planned for the area's cycling infrastructure and other investment e.g. leisure facilities, new accommodation – more accommodation creates more visitors and hubs enable heritage and cycling to leverage higher spend and longer trips from these visitors in the project area
- ▶ Showcase the landscape and the local heritage and their stories
- ▶ Encourage business investment and create the conditions to encourage and support new business start-ups, including pop-ups, allowing businesses to test out new ideas at low risk.

Each hub needs to be on a main cycling trail or close by and to have the potential to accommodate a range of facilities including cycle hire/repair, café, bike storage and cycling friendly visitor accommodation. Consistent high quality facilities and customer service, along with a clear identity for the hub shared across all businesses will be key to success. The objective is to have three main cycling hubs geographically across the project area and overtime to develop smaller secondary hubs to build up the project area.

This is a Destination Plan and it can set out a strategic way forward, but each hub will require considerable additional detailed work to progress, including feasibility studies and business plans for specific elements. There are variables for each hub and unknowns in relation to development and management models, which will influence the final mix of facilities, business models and their economic impact.

The remainder of this section provides further detail for each hub, building on what is in the Destination Plan.

2 HUB 1 - PLEASLEY

Pleasley located on the Nottinghamshire-Derbyshire border, consists of four distinct areas. The tourism opportunities are at Pleasley Vale and Pleasley Pit with opportunities for the pub and shops in Pleasley village to benefit from increased visitor activity and spend.

The Pleasley Vale site is in a narrow-wooded valley, and comprises three large mill buildings that once formed the Viyella factory. These buildings have been the focus for potential regeneration for some time. This is a large and impressive heritage site, set in attractive countryside creating the opportunity to repurpose industrial buildings to create tourism and leisure facilities that breathe new economic energy into the site and tell the industrial heritage story of the mills. Examples such as Salts Mill and Cromford Mills demonstrate how tourism uses can create exciting new visitor attractions in former mill buildings and support new commercial activity including independent shopping and creative businesses.

The Outdoor Activity Centre run by Bolsover District Council is already located at Pleasley Vale but currently operates as a split site. The Council has recently looked at developing a new, standalone outdoor activity centre with some accommodation, a café and cycle hire. This option has recently been submitted for consideration as part of Bolsover District Council's Transformation Programme. An expanded Outdoor Centre could include a wider range of facilities with the potential to attract leisure and corporate visitor markets. In principle, the Council is keen to support this option.

Short cycling routes that link the hub to the Archaeological Way and the Phoenix Greenways encourages visitors to explore further and increases the appeal of the hub as a base for a short break. Pleasley Pit can expand the footprint of the hub, creating a satellite hub with cycling loops linking it to the Mills and potentially provide camping in the Country Park.

Pleasley is an excellent location for a tourism cycling hub because:

- ▶ It is a key location on the cycling trails network - ideally situated at the junction between the Archaeological Way and Phoenix Greenways
- ▶ Its central location means it is in easy reach on foot, by bike and by car from many of the project area's heritage attractions including Hardwick Hall, Creswell Crags and the Welbeck Estate – through cycle loops and good information, this hub can generate more visits and additional spend to these heritage attractions

- ▶ The Outdoor Activity Centre is already located at Pleasley Vale – this adds to the appeal of the site for Fun Families and Active Adults. The Centre is thriving with the ambition to expand into new and larger premises, potentially managing some of the additional tourism facilities, e.g. cycle hire and aspects of visitor accommodation. An expanded Outdoor Centre might include a wider range of facilities with the potential to attract leisure and corporate markets
- ▶ The natural and built heritage of the site adds to the visitor experience and provides an opportunity to tell the textile story of Pleasley - contributing to telling the heritage story of the area and providing a year-round reason to visit for tourists and educational groups – earlier feasibility identified this opportunity
- ▶ It will open up the wider area as a destination - introducing the environment around the Vale to more visitors including the extensive network of ancient woodlands, riverine habitat, open pasture and rock faces
- ▶ The site is sufficiently large to have a tourism cycling function alongside other leisure and business activity – this will help the viability of different elements and a mixed-use site helps with site security – this is essential for camping and caravanning, glamping and other non-serviced accommodation.
- ▶ The Mill building is sufficiently large to include accommodation and other hub facilities.

This is an exciting opportunity but there is further detailed feasibility, market testing and full business planning to be done for the different strands to determine the optimum mix of facilities and where they should be located within the mill building and across the hub.

The tourism development proposals are:

- ▶ A visitor centre with a visitor attraction
- ▶ A café, cycle hire, cycle cleaning and repair facilities and cycle lock up
- ▶ Short to medium cycling loops designed to appeal to Active Adults and Fun Families starting at the Mill that together take in Hardwick Hall, Clumber and Creswell, providing the opportunity to visit other attractions including the café and gallery on Welbeck Estate, Hardwick Hall, Creswell Crags Museum & Visitor Centre and the Mining Museum, Pleasley Pit
- ▶ A relocated and expanded Pleasley Vale Outdoor Activity Centre that realises its potential as an education centre and expands into tourism activity. Pleasley Vale Outdoor Activity Centre has operational centres situated at either end of the Vale. An expanded Centre could be a new build somewhere close to Mill 1 or within the Mill itself, depending on the final mix of agreed facilities. Relocating and expanding the Centre into the mill

building would demonstrate local authority commitment to the development and help attract commercial tenants. Conversely, a new build makes it easier to deliver certain elements including incorporating overnight accommodation and creating state of the art facilities, that will help make the centre commercially competitive. [Mount Cook](#) Adventure Centre in Derbyshire is a good example of a similar scheme (comprises 10 pods sleeping 4 each - 140 in the main building and a camping paddock for 40 people)

- ▶ To develop camping pods/a camp site as an adjunct to a 24/7 supervised Outdoor Activity Centre or on another flat area close to Mill 1
- ▶ To develop camping pods within the Country Park, which could use the Museum café and other facilities. This is a quiet location with good views and good road access. The site has strong community support, with the opportunity to create an innovative partnership working arrangement to enhance the visitor offer. Pleasley Pit Trust and the Land Trust are looking to create a new visitor centre, improve the café offer and toilet facilities, initially through a modular building, but in the long-term will be looking to secure HLF funding to develop bespoke visitor facilities.

Challenges

This is a complex and challenging site. The proposed mix of facilities set out here need further feasibility and market testing. Tourism helps to create a more strategic approach to the regeneration of Mill 1.

- ▶ Pleasley Mills are unusual in that the industrial development sits within a rural area, this makes it a difficult commercial development to deliver, though leisure and tourism creates an appropriate use but 24-hour security onsite will be essential for any non-serviced accommodation
- ▶ While Pleasley Vale benefits from Conservation Area status it is not a World Heritage Site like Derwent Valley in The Peak District or Salts Mill in Saltaire, so does not attract the same attention and funding opportunities, which makes delivering certain aspects more challenging because there are fewer conservation imperatives for regeneration
- ▶ The inclusion of a visitor attraction would significantly strengthen the hub, making it a destination in its own right. However, a feasibility study is required to test the concept, look at capital and revenue funding options and business models. The visitor centre/attraction is likely to require ongoing revenue funding. There may be opportunities to cross-fund the visitor centre through other commercial activity on the site managed by the Council
- ▶ It will be challenging for the hub to be fully commercially sustainable. Feasibility work needs to look at a business model for the different elements and for the hub overall to determine the best way forward.

3 HUB 2 - CRESWELL CRAGS-WELBECK-CLUMBER

This hub brings together three high profile sites to create a stronger tourism cycling hub. Individually these sites have impressive heritage credentials and together, linked by cycling trails and with additional accommodation and good promotion, have the potential to deliver a strong hub, that can be bought forward in Phase 1 of the Plan.

The outstanding landscape of Creswell Crags has applied for UNESCO World Heritage Site status and the Trust is developing a next stage HLF Bid for an uplift and extension of the visitor experience at the museum. Welbeck is a family run estate with an independently run café and gallery, and the estate is looking to invest in cycling facilities. Clumber Park, managed by the National Trust is in their top five most visited places and one of Britain's few Grade 1 registered parks. Within the Park is a Caravan Club site (178 pitches) offering self-contained walking and cycling opportunities and cycle hire. The Park also runs numerous events and an annual festival. This hub is more loosely configured and has been chosen because:

- ▶ It draws together three existing visitor sites to strengthen and connect them in ways that can encourage current visitors to explore further and spend more
- ▶ It can grow accommodation capacity to welcome more visitors – several identified with potential in Stage One of our work are now moving into delivery – further strengthening the added value that a hub approach could deliver here
- ▶ There are already many visitor facilities in place – this creates an opportunity to bring forward this hub more quickly and to drive additional business to existing small businesses
- ▶ It presents opportunities to develop stronger physical and promotional links between strong heritage offers – Welbeck Estate, Creswell Crags and Clumber
- ▶ It strengthens custom from visitors for existing facilities across the hub including the independently run café and gallery in the Welbeck Estate, the cycle hire facilities at Clumber and the museum (paid entry)
- ▶ It encourages visitors staying in the extensive existing accommodation including the Caravan Club site (178 pitches) at Clumber to explore further by bike and on foot and increase visitor spend in the area

- ▶ It will help support the sustainability of the additional accommodation recently agreed at Clumber which will deliver 129 lodges and leisure adjacent to Clumber Park and 40 pitch caravan site close by at Clumber Lane End, encouraging those visitors to explore and spend in the area
- ▶ There is private sector interest from Welbeck Estate in developing cycling facilities.

This hub provides an opportunity to encourage current visitors to explore further and spend more now, with further growth potential over time as the area attracts more visitors. There is potential to deliver more accommodation too. The hub also creates opportunities to manage visitor numbers across the sites. This hub presents good opportunities for developing out of season activity. The main tourism development proposals are:

- ▶ To create cycle trails that link the key hub sites including overcoming the A60 crossing
- ▶ To develop loops – attractive circular cycle routes passing through some of the best landscapes in the area. Shorter loops appealing to Fun Families will need to be developed
- ▶ To create more cycle facilities – Welbeck Estate is looking into developing cycle hire and lock up at Lady Margaret’s Hall as part of a leisure centre development plus an easy cycle loop with waymarking around the Welbeck Estate, that is likely to appeal to Active Adults
- ▶ To develop more accommodation in the hub area, realising several schemes already in discussion – potentially a small community-led caravan site at Creswell, a private sector-led 40 pitch caravan site at Clumber, a private sector-led 129-unit lodge park at Clumber and ensuring the retention and expansion of the Caravan & Motorhome Club site at Clumber Park
- ▶ To provide visitor accommodation on Welbeck Estate – a medium term opportunity and subject to the estate owners interest. The Estate could look at a wide range of accommodation options. A strong option that fits with the Plan objectives and would deliver a product appropriate for the estate market positioning is quality glamping, eco-pods and eco-lodges located in the grounds, maybe in peripheral locations, amongst woods and down by the lake. They are temporary structures so can be moved. Examples of similar developments include [Natural Retreats](#) and [Featherdown](#)
- ▶ To develop collaborative marketing between the three hub sites to strengthen the collective offer and establish the hub identity.

Challenges

- ▶ Multiple ownership and different projects requires good strategic liaison between partners
- ▶ To create a cycling hub requires completing the Clowne Branch Line which enables the development of cycling loops from each of the three sites and links them together.

4 HUB 3 - GRASSMOOR-CHESTERFIELD

This hub is a longer-term opportunity, though there are some more immediate actions for Grassmoor. The opportunity is to create a hub at the north of the project area to complement the existing concentration of activity close to Sherwood Forest to the south. Chesterfield will act as The Peak District gateway. There are also opportunities to increase visitors to Grassmoor with its views across to The Peaks. The hub will stretch the project area out to Chesterfield, a town that will benefit from significant regeneration over the next decade including at the Avenue site on the edge of the town allocated for new housing and community facilities with a small leisure component.

The hub has also been chosen because:

- ▶ It creates the opportunity to develop a stronger visitor offer close to the Peak District with the potential to attract visitors from the National Park
- ▶ There are funding opportunities created by the regeneration of Chesterfield and HS2 to help support the development of new visitor facilities and extend the leisure cycle network – these investments will enable the cycling routes needed to make this a viable tourism cycling hub
- ▶ New cycle routes will link Chesterfield more strongly with the project area and in particular with Hardwick, strengthening the destination offer
- ▶ There is local interest and commitment to developing the visitor economy
- ▶ There are more immediate opportunities at Grassmoor Country Park to create more visitor accommodation and cycle hire to create early action to start delivering the hub.

The tourism development proposals which can be moved forward now are:

- ▶ To create a touring caravan site at Grassmoor Country Park with a minimum 50-60 pitches to create a critical mass to support a warden providing 24/7 security, but potentially 100 pitches with 30 glamping/camping pods. This is an attractive site with views to the Peak District – the Country Park is owned and managed by the County Council
- ▶ To provide more visitor facilities including a café – visitors in the caravan site will support commercial viability
- ▶ To create cycle hire facilities in the Country Park, ideally located on the camping site and run by the operator to deliver a commercial proposition.

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- ▶ To create a cycle link from the end of the Trans Pennine Trail at Chesterfield to the Phoenix Greenways starting at Grassmoor to encourage cycling and encourage long distance cyclists to use Grassmoor accommodation/Chesterfield as a stopover.

Longer term, there may be potential to create additional accommodation elsewhere in the Chesterfield area. This might be at The Avenue site or within the town centre.

Challenges

- ▶ The timescale for delivering this hub is long term and reliant on many external factors and variables – it is not possible to be precise about the components of the hub or the scale of the opportunity and benefits at this stage
- ▶ The viability of creating a cycling hub is largely reliant on linking up Chesterfield via cycle routes and trails within the project area
- ▶ The tourism potential of Chesterfield generally may increase over time when regeneration projects come to fruition. It may then be possible to relook at other sites within the Chesterfield area to create a tourism hub.