Pleasley Hub

Stage 3
Pleasley Hub: Action Plan

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1. Pleasley Hub Action Plan: Introduction

The Stage 3 Action Plan report is a culmination of a detailed feasibility study to test and develop options to take forward the Visit Cycle Sleep Repeat plan. It builds on the work outlined in the **Stage 1** and **Stage 2** reports.

The **Stage 1 Report – Audit and Assessment** demonstrated that the opportunity clearly exists at Pleasley to develop and enhance the destination offer. It also showed that a number of key components are already in place, which form a strong foundation to develop an attractive cycling and heritage (and related hospitality) offer, given its central, accessible location, impressive trails network, lack of congestion and gently undulating topography. The 3.7 million residents within a one-hour drivetime catchment represent a high initial base for leisure tourism day and short-break visitors. Post-COVID 19 tourism trends will play to Pleasley's strengths in terms of 'close-to-home', authentic, outdoor, active, uncrowded, safe and secure. However, the area is not seen as a mature destination and actions need to reflect this. It is also important to recognise the challenges of the socio-economic and demographic make-up of the towns and it is vital that destination development and investment contributes to the economic and social well-being of the area.

The **Stage 2 Report – Moving Forward** outlined a suggested programme of action to realise the tourism potential of the area and build on the current investments throughout the Pleasley Hub area.

Following further engagement with key partners, stakeholders and the private sector the Stage 3 Action Plan includes a broad range of projects under six main themes:

- **Theme 1: Destination Connectors**
- **Theme 2: Improving the visitor infrastructure**
- **Theme 3: Branding and Marketing**
- **Theme 4: Product Development**
- **Theme 5: Community Engagement**
- **Theme 6: Governance and Partnership**

The view is that actions need to be taken forward across each of the themes to position the hub as an exemplar sustainable destination and community asset.

A core component of the original Destination Plan[1] is the development of cycling-led visitor hubs, of which Pleasley is one[2]. The Hubs are an important focus for investment because they deliver a critical mass of product; deliver a concentration of complementary business activity; capitalise on the investment; showcase the landscape and encourage business investment. Consistent high-quality facilities and customer service, along with a clear identity for the hub shared across all businesses will be key to success. Hub boundaries are fluid and delivery will need to be opportunity-led. The hub principle was taken forward in Pleasley with three 'mini-hubs' being identified for destination investment.

Delivery will require resources – both partner time and financial support – as well as a firm commitment to collaborate and share resources to drive forward the Action Plan. Designing and implementing a new governance structure will be an early priority. Clearly, much activity will be dependent on attracting external funding so it is difficult to assign precise timeframes to delivery.

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[1] Visit. Sleep. Cycle. Repeat Destination Plan, Blue Sail, January 2018 www.derbyshire.gov.uk/vscr
[2] Other Hubs are Creswell Crags – Welbeck – Clumber and Grassmoor - Chesterfield

2. A Plan for Recovery and Growth

2.1   Coming out of COVID

The travel industry has suffered enormously as a result of the global pandemic – the World Travel & Tourism Council feared that 174 million jobs in the sector would be lost by the end of 2020. However, vaccines are being rolled out and there are green shoots of optimist for 2021 and beyond for the tourism industry. VisitBritain research shows that people are beginning to feel 'more confident' of overnight travel within the UK from April 2021 onwards and 30% feeling 'very confident' about being able to take an overnight UK break from October 2021. [3] The OECD states 'domestic tourism is expected to recover more quickly and offers the chance for driving recovery'[4].

However, the landscape has changed and people have changed their perceptions of travel. In the short term, the post Covid tourism landscape will be influenced by the following factors:

- Importance of safety and hygiene measures in all elements of the visitor experience
- Demand is likely to be greater for socially distanced – spacious destinations. Rural areas, destinations with open/car-free public space, for outdoor activities and attractions, and for self-catered accommodation
- Faster recovery in demand from families and those visiting friends and relatives
- Marketing messages need to respond to evolving market concerns over the next few years – not enough to say 'come now'
- Constraints on budgets and holiday time mean travellers want to find out as much as possible about their destination before getting there
- Prevailing interest in staycations and trips close to home
- Reassurance that there is enough and of the right type of things to do
- Ease of booking either before or during the trip; clarity on terms and conditions, cancellations etc

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The Pleasley Hub is a destination of open spaces for outdoor activities. There is the potential to attract visitors looking for a good value staycation. Positioning the destination correctly and ensuring high quality experiences will be key.

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[3] VisitBritain Consumer weekly tracker wave 20
[4] Tourism Policy Responses to Covid-19. OECD. June 2020

In addition to the short-term factors above, other global trends in tourism are also worth considering as these will influence travel patterns in the longer term:

Staycations

This trend looks set to continue into 2021 with many travellers fearing foreign holidays and plane travel and preferring instead to book themselves into some coastal or countryside accommodation in the UK. Bookings for camp sites and glamping are already soaring for 2021. Website pitchup.com has already had 1,400 bookings for next summer, an increase of more than 500% on the previous year, while glamping collection Canopy and Stars says it has taken more bookings for August 2021 than for August 2020.[5]

Ageing Population

One of the most significant trends affecting destinations is the ageing population. As the Boomers mature, reach retirement, and have paid off their mortgages they are likely to remain one of the most significant travel markets for both domestic and international travel. Their interests are well documented, and they want to keep their body and mind stimulated and meet like-minded people. With 37%[6] of the European population (age 15+) over 55 accounting for 39% of all private travel there is plenty of evidence to support the value of this demographic.

Multi-generational travel

Multi-generational groups, 'Grandtravel', and differently shaped, non-linear families are all increasingly prevalent. This was on the up before the pandemic, but 2020 has highlighted the importance of sharing with family. Large group accommodation will be popular in the coming years. This is also an important consideration for group of friends wishing to get together and rent large, multi-unit accommodation where they can party and catch up on lost time together during the pandemic.

Wellness

Wellness is an increasingly large and mainstream aspect of global tourism believed to account for around 14%[7] of all tourism expenditure ($563bn) and faster growing than all tourism at 14% (2013-2015) compared to all tourism growth of 6.9%. While there is a core of visitors who seek and take wellness dominated breaks, the majority (84%) integrate wellness into their mainstream breaks. The research also highlights the importance of the

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[5] The Guardian - https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/aug/11/campsites-and-holiday-cottage-bookings-for-summer-2021-soar

[6] Tourism Trends and Ageing. Eurostats. 2016

[7] Global Wellness Institute

natural environment when taking a wellness break. Wellness, in particular mental health, is more important than ever as people have become acutely aware of these issues during lockdown - as people have adapted to working from home, social distancing, rules on mixing with friends and family, loss of employment and/or income etc. Visitors want to escape into nature and enjoy sensory experiences e.g., yoga retreats, long-distance walks, forest-bathing, wellness focused facilities such as wild river baths, open air hotels, outdoor spas, yoga, meditation, hiking and massage therapies.

Authentic & the pursuit of real

Visitors want to connect with a place and its people. For example, they might participate in a workshop, attend local festivals, or visit studios of local artisans. People are seeking local interactions and to support communities. Recent research[8] found an emotional link between people and places that is often difficult to verbalise, but which is tangible and affects people psychologically and physically. Importantly people want to share their connection to a significant place with others. So, when we get it right, the visitors will do our marketing job for us. People are seeking experiences that combine fun /learning/self-improvement/well-being. They want local food, drink, crafts offered through independent businesses rather than chains.

Maximising Behaviour

Visitors want to cram a lot into a short space of time, enjoying unique experiences across the day and into the evening. It is important that there is a range of quality experiences on offer that are sufficiently different from home. Inspiration and information about what there is to do, and how to access and book, is important.

Sustainable & Green Travel

People are concerned by sustainable and responsible travel and how they travel to and around a destination, where the food and drink comes from and how service providers are managing scarce resources. According to Booking.com's Sustainable Travel Report for 2020[9], 72% of global travellers have identified sustainable travel as being important to them, while 55% say they are looking to make more sustainable choices once they can travel again.

Technology Trends

Social media is increasingly prominent in travel marketing with the public driving content creation. Video is the new currency for storytelling and Destination Management

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[8] Places That Make Us. National Trust. 2017
[9] https://partner.booking.com/en-gb/click-magazine/sustainable-tourism-becomes-priority-72-global-travellers

Organisations can only control their own content or channels; not content that is user generated. People will also expect technology to help control health risks whilst on the move with features such as virtual check in, online reservations and touch free payments.

Glampervan, Road Trips & Slo-Travel

A trend for 2021 is hiring or owning a camper van. These are then upgraded to provide a moving 'glamping experience'. They are popular as they offer everything you need, neatly packed around you, self-sufficiency and the freedom to travel in your own literal bubble[10].

Flexible booking policies

Of course, with cancellation being rife over the past year, many travellers are also looking towards flexible booking policies and free cancellations. While most trips will be covered under travel insurance, it looks likely that people will lean towards hotels and packages with more accommodating cancellation policies to save the hassle of chasing up lost funds from insurers. Airlines are scrapping some of their 'flight change' fees whilst hotel chains are allowing no-charge cancellations up to 24-hours prior to travel.

Last Minute Bookings

Whilst there is more flexibility being offered, it is likely that people will make last minute decisions about travel if they see a window of opportunity.

'Ooo' Travel – the Workation

Out of Office working – so many people are now not working from their traditional office setting during traditional office hours. People can continue to work from their holiday locations. Wi-Fi and connectivity are important for people so they can enjoy themselves whilst continuing to keep up to date at work.

Budget Vs Extravagance

Both ends of the scale seem relevant in travel trends for 2021 onwards - some who have endured hardship will be looking for maximum value from travel, whilst others who haven't been able to spend, are looking for very high value experiences such as hiring a private island and jets…

2.2   What does this mean for the Pleasley Hub?

In the process of COVID recovery, there is a real opportunity for Pleasley to position itself as a safe, accessible destination with a strong focus on distinctiveness, sustainability, social

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[10] https://www.campinginbritain.co.uk/camping-news/2020-was-the-year-of-the-campervan-but-could-2021-be-even-busier-as-people-see-now-see-them-as-the-safe-way-to-travel/

well-being, health and outdoor based activities. Post COVID 'drivers', which will help shape the Action Plan include:

- A need for flexible accommodation including self-catering and 'glamping'
- A need to highlight the wide-open spaces, views and outdoor activities including cycling and walking
- A need to ensure food, shopping and attractions are high quality, and above all, immaculately clean and well presented
- Stand out events to attract new audiences
- 'New' product to attract attention and raise profile through media stories
- Ensure the offer is genuinely high quality as competition from other UK destinations for staycation is very strong
- Ensure walks/cycle routes are well maintained and signposted
- Local shops, local produce in the smaller towns and villages. People want to support local producers, crafters, artists etc.

3. Action Plan

3.1   The Vision

To create a community-led sustainable destination that develops, refines and presents an authentic responsible tourism product with a focus on environmental and community benefits. The area will be known as a premier outdoor cycling and walking destination of choice, where visitors will receive a genuine welcome and enjoy outstanding experiences of our countryside and heritage. The area will have an enhanced reputation and support from its neighbouring destinations, who appreciate and benefit from its complementary offer.

3.2   Aims

Our aims are to:

- Secure industry and community leadership to guide strategic direction and participate in delivery
- Maximise the outdoor product and focus on excellent service for the local community and visitors
- Embed sustainability best practice - create regenerative economies that reinvest in local social and natural capital
- Raise spend levels particularly by encouraging visitors to stay longer, staying overnight, visiting midweek and in quieter months
- Share the benefits of tourism more widely and enable visitors to explore the wider area with new infrastructure such as trails and visitor experiences
- Improve the cycling and walking experiences and capitalise on opportunities to diversify the product offer
- Stimulate local and community enterprises to invest in sustainable communities and the visitor economy
- Optimise wider leverage from planned major investments
- Proactively market the area as a sustainable and responsible destination

The Action Plan is about developing a confident exemplar of a sustainable destination where tourism businesses thrive whilst sustaining the environment and engaging local communities.

Action Plan for the delivery of the Pleasley Hub

1.0 Destination Connectors

The focus is to build on the existing destination hubs - Hardwick Hall and Pleasley Pit and Country Park, and support the future regeneration of Pleasley Vale - to offer new experiences and attract new audiences, from the surrounding communities and visitors to the area. The priority is to develop a cluster and critical mass of visitor products and experiences.

No.	Description	Rationale	Actions	Funding	Partners	Priority
Pleasley Pit and Country Park						
1.1	Support DCS, LT and PPT to produce a masterplan for the site and provide an appropriate cluster of 'hub' facilities.	Significant investment has already been made with the provision of a new visitor centre and improvements to the trails network. Further opportunities exist to capitalise on this investment and position the Country Park as a micro-hub.	1.1.1 Develop a masterplan for the Country Park 1.1.2 Seek additional funding 1.1.3 Develop improved facilities & revenue generating opportunities	External funding required	BCP DCC LT PPT	High
Hardwick Hall						
1.2	Support the National Trust to develop complementary visitor products at Hardwick Hall which encourage visitors to stay longer and connect	Hardwick Hall is the 'jewel in the crown' in terms of attractions in the region. The management team is keen for the attraction to be	1.2.1 Agree specific actions with NT 1.2.2 Seek additional funding	External funding required	NT BCP VEC	Medium

	the attraction to the wider Pleasley Hub offer, including: • Enhanced trail connections • Cycle hub provision • Extending the self-catering product	outward facing and link with other tourism programmes which improve the quality of the visitor offer and encourage visitors to stay longer in the area and spend more in the local economy.	1.2.3 Develop improved facilities & revenue generating opportunities 1.2.4 Develop specific physical linkages with other 'hubs' and tourism businesses			
Pleasley Vale						
1.3	Support BDC with any future programme of regeneration at the Mills	An exciting opportunity exists to develop the Mills as a must-see 'pay-as you go' outdoor destination experience, which complements the other micro-destinations in the hub and helps to engage with new audiences	1.3.1 BDC to clarify plans by 2024 1.3.2 BCP & Partners to offer appropriate support	BDC external funding also required	BDC BCP VEC	Medium

2.0 Improving the visitor infrastructure

This theme will focus on the provision of high quality, sustainable visitor infrastructure and information with a particular focus on developing, enhancing and maintaining an exemplar trails network[11]

No.	Description	Rationale	Actions	Funding	Partners	Priority
Trails Network						
2.1	Develop a network of quality accessible/connected walking and cycling routes for all abilities. The priority will be to develop routes to target key markets and identify potential hero routes	The area already has a number of well-connected trails and significant recent investment has taken place with more planned in 2021-22.	2.1.1 Complete RDPE funded Cycling Trails Programme by summer 2021 (**£404,000** funding secured) 2.1.2 Complete Skegby Trail works by March 2022 (**£150,000** funding secured) 2.1.3 Complete Pleasley Vale trail improvements by March 2022 (**£463,000** funding secured) 2.1.4 Complete improved connection with the Stockley Trail by March 2022 (**£463,000** funding secured) 2.1.5 Seek funding for further trail improvement as prioritised by the	RDPE, LTP & DfT funding already secured for 2.1.1 – 2.1.4 Further external funding required to deliver 2.1.5	BCP DCC BDC NCC VEC	High

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[11] The VSCR Trails Audit (Aecom) provides a priority of actions to development and enhancement the VSCR Trails Network across the whole programme area

			Trails Audit report **(£120,000 funding secured for projects in Shirebrook & Pleasley)**			
Signage & way finding						
2.2	Develop a comprehensive wayfinding strategy linked to the trail network, including 'gateway' / entry signage at key arrival points and additional trail signage linked to location mapping and interpretation	Given the scale of the area, effective wayfinding is critical in terms of managing visitor flows and important in terms of the overall visitor experience	2.2.1 Develop initial projects through current LTP funding – VSCR App, AW app refresh, signage improvements through Shirebrook, refresh Pleasley Mural 2.2.2 Seek additional funding to deliver a comprehensive signage programme	LTP available **(£30,000)** to deliver 2.2.1. External funding required for 2.2.2	BCP DCC BDC NCC Partners	High
Maintenance						
2.3	Building on the existing volunteer base, expand the volunteer provision, with specific role in maintaining the trails network and enhancing the areas natural capital - work with	Structures need to be put in place to ensure effective maintenance of the trails network & opportunities are created for communities to enhance their local natural capital	2.3.1 Seek to consolidate existing provisions for AW and CBL 2.3.2 Complete VSCR Natural Capital report by summer 2021 2.3.3 Seek to secure additional funding to increase volunteering	Existing LTP, partners funding for 2.3.1. No funding	BCP DCC BDC Establish a network of new partners	High

	youth groups (Guides, Scouts and others) to design and implement a range of coordinated programmes		opportunities – look at developing a shared ownership model	required for 2.3.2. External funding required for 2.3.3	e.g., Parish Councils etc	
2.4	Improve contract maintenance of the trails network	In addition to the volunteer offer, there is recognition of the need to enhance contract maintenance of the trails network, if it is to fulfil its potential as a driver for sustainable communities and support growth of the visitor economy	2.4.1 Clarify existing maintenance and undertake a gap-analysis 2.4.2 Clarify landowner liabilities and assess how these could address gaps in current provision 2.4.3 Seek an additional funding model to support future contract maintenance	Officer time, LTP, additional funding	BCP DCC NCC Partners etc	High
Additional priority activities to develop the offer in the hub						
2.5	Seek to develop an alternative economic model based on the principles of a virtuous economy – consider the implementation of Donut Economics and Circular Economies	A virtuous economy is at the heart of the principles of sustainability – recycling profit back into the destination to support wider redistributive environmental and social benefits	2.5.1 Seek to develop the business case, and if appropriate implement specific actions (consider 'voluntourism', 'willingness to pay' model for specific activities, action on food waste and food miles and supporting the localism agenda)	Internal & external resource/	BCP VEC	High

			2.5.2 Note the significant contribution this could make to action 3.1 as part of the brand descriptor			
2.6	Identify and designate outdoor events space/s (some with supporting infrastructure)	Events can play an important role in extending the season, promoting greater participation and attracting new people to visit	2.6.1 Identify appropriate site/s 2.6.2 Deliver an appropriate events programme	Internal & external funding required	VEC	Low
2.7	Work with public transport providers to create a more sustainable method of transport into and around the Hub/VSCR particularly routes between key sites (which is likely to be on a seasonal basis)	Would support and build on the development of the sustainable USP for VSCR	2.7.1 Seek to work with transport providers to improve the offer	Internal & external funding required	VEC	Low
2.8	Develop a Cycle Events programme	Events provide excellent marketing opportunities, can be targeted at quieter times of the year/week, and can bring high numbers of cyclists and non-cyclists if participatory in nature.	2.8.1 Seek to develop a cycling events programme with partners	Internal & external funding required	VEC	Low

		Depending on scale, there is potential to attract some form of commercial sponsorship				
2.9	Investigate the potential of establishing cycle hire or loan scheme - including electric bikes	Provision of cycle hire/loan would assist local people & visitors	2.9.1 Investigate the business case for cycle hire/loan facilities 2.9.2 Implement - if there is a social/economic rationale	External funding required	BCP DCC BDC VEC	Low
2.10	Introduce (and promote) key viewing points within the destination - possibly including selected positioning of sculptural pieces and viewing platforms	Adds positively to visitor experience and opportunities for sharing images from viewing points on social media which leads to raising the profile of VSCR ('selfie' moments)	2.10.1 Identify & agree key locations with partners 2.10.2 Look to include these locations within any future marketing/promotional material 2.10.3 Seek funding for sculpture or other artworks to enhance the offer	External funding required	VEC	Low
2.11	Work with tourism businesses to build the Tourism Network and encourage packaged breaks, other offers and	Critical that tourism businesses feel ownership and benefit from the action programme	2.11.1 Identify the best mechanism for working with local businesses 2.11.2 Develop an action plan and implement	Internal & external funding required	VEC	Low

joint marketing focused on VSCR as a destination[12]	

3.0 Branding and Marketing

The aim is to develop a clear brand profile and identity for the area highlighting key USPs targeted towards the family friendly and active adults market segments

No.	Description	Rationale	Action	Funding	Partners	Priority
Brand development[13]						
3.1	Develop a brand descriptor, values and proposition based on benefits rather than features or geography - with clear relevance to target markets (fun-families and active adults). This needs to	There are strong geographic neighbouring brands (Peak District/ Sherwood), so it would be counter-productive	3.1.1 Conclude the plan with Fred Marketing by winter 2021 (Covid dependent) 3.1.2 Seek ways to implement the findings of the Fred report & monitor progress	BRRP funding available for 3.1.1 (**£25,000**)	VEC	High

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[12] This could be extended to include activities funded through the Pedal Peak for Business initiative, e.g., grants support, cycle tourism toolkit etc
[13] This work is being taken forward by Fred Marketing

				Internal & external funding required to deliver 3.1.2		
	reflect and align with other destination branding structures in the area.	and expensive to create another. In addition, the Pleasley hub crosses county and district boundaries. It will be important to consult stakeholders on the brand ideas				
Continued brand dissemination and reinforcement						
3.2	Develop brand and marketing toolkit for distribution to partners, including target market information	It is important that all stakeholders and host communities have a shared understanding of the destination story and how to use it to best advantage	3.2.1 Develop, implement and monitor the brand and marketing toolkit	BRRP funding as above. Internal & external funding required for additional actions	VEC	Medium
3.3	Develop brand collateral – e.g., marketing information, website, shared on-line content	As a 'new' destination the Pleasley Hub will depend on a range of	3.3.1 Develop a strategy for delivering brand collateral and implement	Internal & external resource/	VEC	Medium

		stakeholders, businesses, communities and users picking up on the brand and distributing content through a range of on and off-line channels and acting as advocates		funding required		
3.4	Maintain online distribution channels	It is unlikely that there will be the resources in the long term for major campaigns so it is important that content remains current, relevant and available to share into other channels	3.4.1 Look to create exciting content across a range of platforms. Update regularly with new and engaging content 3.4.2 Partners to share content across their social media channels	Internal & external resource/ funding required	VEC	Low

4.0 Product Development

The priority is to design and deliver a quality outdoor active product which will encourage residents and visitors to responsibly enjoy and use the area as a destination for physical activity

No.	Description	Rationale		Funding	Partners	Priority
Key development supporting the Pleasley Pit Country Park masterplan						
4.1	Implement the Pleasley Pit camping pod development as an exemplar eco-friendly accommodation offer	Build up overnight stay capacity and make 'statement' to kick-start product enhancements as part of the delivery of the Pleasley Pit masterplan and wider development of the Pleasley Hub	4.1.1 Conclude business case for the Wood Yard/Cooling Ponds site by summer 2021, 4.1.2 If there is a strong business case, seek to develop the project further with key partners – this would require the development of an implementation model, legal agreements, planning permission, securing external funding and operating partner etc	BRRP funding available for 4.1.1 Internal & external resource/ funding required to deliver 4.1.2	BCP DCC LT PPT	High

Developments to support the wider Pleasley Hub					
4.2	Work with partners to coordinate and promote events throughout the VSCR area	Events, festivals and social activities bring together, and support, greater connectivity between communities and can generate economic benefits outside peak periods	4.2.1 Develop an events programme and implement	Internal & external resource/ funding required	VEC	Medium
4.3	Support the provision of quality cycle-friendly self-catering accommodation by providing a toolkit/guide linked to quality grading. Targeted at: • Farmers/landowners considering introducing innovative self-catering units (wooden pods, tree tents, shepherd's huts) • Rooms in pubs • AirBnB and similar	Build accommodation capacity within the destination. Help to service short break market with attractive, high quality units in accessible locations	4.3.1 Develop a toolkit/guide linked to quality grading and implement	Internal & external resource/ funding required	VEC	Low

No.	Description	Rationale		Funding	Partners	Priority
4.4	Support appropriate third-party accommodation development and seek to broaden the existing offer	Build up overnight bedstock capacity	4.4.1 Support appropriate third-party accommodation development 4.4.2 Encourage existing accommodation providers to invest in and broaden their product offer	Internal & external resource/ funding required	VEC	Low

5.0 Community Engagement

This theme is more than just involving the community in destination planning, community should be at the heart of VSCR. The focus is on putting in place actions which help communities direct, develop and deliver cross-cutting - visitor economy, health and wellbeing and environmental improvements.

No.	Description	Rationale		Funding	Partners	Priority
5.1	Promote and develop community-based programmes for taking the project forward e.g. • Skills training	The project will succeed because local people can see the benefits of it, socially, environmentally, economically and culturally.	5.1.1 Seek to develop and implement a range of community programmes	Internal & external resource/ funding required	VEC partners	High

	- Ambassador training - Volunteering opportunities - Establishing a community tourism development fund	Local people can act as guardians and will provide a high proportion of year-round usage				
5.2	Work with health practitioners and prescribe physical health and mental well-being activities such as cycling, walking, green exercise, conservation tasks and connecting with nature to improve overall health and well-being	Post-Covid VSCR presents strong opportunities for delivering formal health related activities	5.2.1 Continue to work with partners on the delivery of programmes that support community health and well-being 5.2.1 Seek new opportunities to expand the provision	Internal & external resource/ funding required	VEC partners	High

6.0 Governance and Partnership

Success will also be dependent on the plan being 'owned' and driven forward by a partnership of the key stakeholders. It will be important to develop sustainable models for ongoing marketing, operations, maintenance and investment

No.	Description	Rationale		Funding	Partners	Priority
6.1	Develop effective governance and partnership structures both at a strategic and operational level to ensure that the plan is 'owned' and driven forward by a partnership of key stakeholders. This includes considering the role and responsibilities of the VEC	Wider Visitor Economy Consortium is important as a forum / sounding board / information exchange but may find it difficult to focus on this project	6.1.1 Refresh terms of reference / role of VEC 6.1.2 Assess options for creating a new delivery model 6.1.3 Identify champions, clear roles and visible point of contact to support the implementation and success of the programme	Internal resource/ funding required	BCP DCC VEC	High

The Action Plan provides a coherent, compelling and deliverable mix of actions – many of which have funding secured – to transform Pleasley into a new and attractive destinations particularly post COVID. Effective leadership is needed to drive forward this new agenda particularly in terms of destination development, infrastructure investment and place marketing.

Consultations clearly indicated a desire for a slimmer, more action-led structure. The existing **Visitor Economy Consortium** (VEC) provides an important platform to engage and communicate with all partners and stakeholders involved in tourism in the broader VSCR area. However, it meets very occasionally and perhaps lacks commitment from all partners as to its form and function. The destination function must retain the support and participation of these wider partners. We recommend that the terms of reference of the VEC are reviewed and up-dated for it to take on a strategic advisory role to support destination development and marketing.

However, there is clearly an issue with capacity amongst the partners and stakeholders. Bolsover Countryside Partnership currently takes a lead role on strategic visioning, advocacy, partner engagement, securing funding, project delivery and administration. Partners and stakeholders need to consider how they can support the work of the Countryside Partnership if the actions outlined in this plan are to be realistically delivered.

We recommend the formation of a new **Pleasley Destination Partnership** to coordinate and lead delivery of the Action Plan. The Bolsover Countryside Partnership and Derbyshire County Council will need to continue to facilitate destination development but it will be important that other partners, from the public, private and voluntary sector, commit time and resources to support further collaboration and partnership working.

4. Measuring success

It will be important for partners to agree performance indicators to monitor the performance and impact of the Action Plan. The starting point will be to identify the baseline data which is available across all partners and to ensure consistent data is collected to enable like-for-like comparison. The indicators set will need to complement and integrate with the indicators used by local authority's and other partners (DMPs) to ensure consistency and ease of collection. The indicators need to be straightforward and cost effective to use.

It is recognised that tourism has an impact – not only economic but also on the environment and host communities. To monitor the impact of the Action Plan a number of different performance indicators (measures of success) can be reviewed, which are identified in the table below. Regular monitoring is required as this will help to flag up any potential issues at an early stage. Each has different resource implications.

Measuring	Comment	Resource implication
Volume and seasonality of tourism (staying visitor numbers, day visitors – including international visitors, occupancy levels)	Likely to require commissioning a separate STEAM / Cambridge Model analysis for the study area	M-H
Visitor satisfaction levels	This helps to ensure the visitor experience reflects the brand values of the "hub" offer / experience. Online survey to capture visitor feedback to be promoted by tourism businesses. Could potentially be run in-house to reduce cost or work with a third party	L-M
Tourism enterprise performance (new jobs created in sector, new businesses opening or closing)	Will require a partnership approach coordinated by the local authority to identify business performance	L-M

Community / reaction	Monitoring media channels, including social media to pick up positive and negative feedback from community. At a simple level could be via setting up specific Google News Alerts through to more intensive community survey	L - M
Level of investment into tourism and recreation infrastructure	Maintain an ongoing record of investment programmes and details of respective funders on an ongoing basis broken down quarterly and annually	L
Investment secured	Keep track of public sector investment secured. But also private sector lead investment.	L

This will provide both hard and soft data which can be used not only to monitor the Action Plan but enable more informed decision making and prioritise resources in the future.

A further critical element is to ensure that the results are feedback to the tourism businesses.

5. Summary Conclusion

Our research, consultations (including stakeholder and partner consensus with regards to the Action Plan) and the likely up-lift in staycations following the pandemic demonstrate a strong rationale to drive forward a coherent programme to create a sustainable tourism hub at Pleasley. Such a programme fits within the overall Destination Plan, to create a stronger destination that stands out from the competition - to grow overnight stays, to encourage visitors to explore further on a bike, and to support the growth of tourism and cycling-related businesses.

Although not driven by the pandemic, the Action Plan provides an important early focus for recovery planning.

Planning for Post Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has been an existential threat to the UK's visitor economy. Visit England estimates that there will be a 48% drop in domestic tourism in 2020 and that international visits are unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels before 2023 at the earliest. The crisis and virus-induced reality of a continued economic downturn is leading destination organisations and the hospitality industry to apply a new perspective on destination development and community involvement.

*One of the key features that most industry professionals agree on is the need (and opportunity) to build **recovery through the domestic tourist** and visitor market with a further boost for the staycation market in the UK.*

*The role of strong (not necessarily big!) **destination management organisations will be critical** in shaping the response and providing a coordinated programme of actions with support for appropriate development and infrastructure, where applicable.*

*In its summary paper to Government in May 2020 relating to Covid Response and Recovery, the Tourism Society emphasised the importance of strengthening the capacity of DMOs and highlighted the need "**to develop and promote differentiated experiences**." This is very much in line with the approach to Pleasley Hub, while promoting effective relationships between local businesses, food and service suppliers, local communities and visitors.*

*In the process of recovery for the visitor economy there is a real opportunity to embrace a **more sustainable approach** for the whole sector which will also help avoid (or at least minimise) conflict between visitors, host communities and the environment and ensure that impacts can be measured and mitigated through effective planning, development and*

*operating regimes, with **social equity and cohesion** at the root / core of all decision making.*

All of these trends favour the priority target development and promotion for the Pleasley Hub. The action plan focuses on actions to reset and drive recovery in the sector and set in motion practical steps to ensure that tourism businesses are ready and able to welcome visitors focusing on the domestic market. Given these themes, the Pleasley Hub offers an opportunity to contribute to a new 'destination' model, moving away from a traditional focus on ever-growing visitor numbers and tourism receipts towards a more community-led recovery with a focus on:

- *Local distinctiveness*
- *Sustainability*
- *Social well-being*
- *Health and outdoor based activities*
- *Engaging experience*

The work focused on the Pleasley Hub, which was identified within VSCR as one of the three hubs, where growth should be targeted. It has culminated in the development of the Action Plan presented across the six themes outlined - Destination Connectors, Improving the visitor infrastructure, Branding and Marketing, Product Development, Community Engagement and Governance and Partnership.

The objective for VSCR is to have main cycling hubs geographically across the area and to develop smaller secondary hubs to build up the scale and scope of the destination offer and community asset. A key aspect of the plan is to use what is special about the area - the outstanding heritage and the opportunities for leisure cycling – to form a Visitor Hub and grow the visitor economy in the area.

The Stage 1 report sets out the Position Paper for the Pleasley Hub. It provides an analysis and critical assessment: of the current tourism offer and opportunities for developing the area as a short-stay, sustainable destination; product gaps; destination 'fit' to core market segments; and spatial and capacity opportunities.

In terms of market profile, the overall headline population figures for the one and two hour drivetime contours are very positive. There is a large target marketplace to service the 'destination', but there are some challenges in extending the 'reach' of Pleasley to attract visitors from outside the immediate catchment. The demographic analysis does highlight that there are some significant pockets of deprivation in and close to the immediate study

area, which impacts on affordability, spend levels and consequently product development opportunities (particularly for local residents).

The Stage 2 Moving Forward paper concluded that in many respects, VSCR is 'the hole in the doughnut' surrounded by world-class destinations in the Peak District and Sherwood Forest, with some deficiencies evident in terms of its visitor product (particularly a lack of serviced accommodation). However, the research confirmed that a number of key ingredients are in place, which form a strong foundation to develop an attractive cycling and heritage (and related hospitality) offer given its central, accessible location, impressive trails network, lack of congestion and gently undulating topography.

This stage 3 report, which centres around the Action Plan, sets out priorities based on agreed criteria including viability, sustainability and stakeholder / community support. And builds on current and recent investment of nearly £4M in the Pleasley Hub and throughout the wider VSCR area.

The Action Plan presents a suite of detailed interventions and initiatives which respond to the vision to create a community-led destination that develops, refines and presents an authentic responsible tourism product with a focus on sustainability and community benefits.[14]

The view is that actions need to be taken forward across each of the themes to position the hub as an exemplar sustainable destination and community asset. This will include developing an overall masterplan for Pleasley Pit Country Park to ensure that all destination components complement and spatially work together effectively as a visitor experience. A clear articulation of investment priorities of partners at Pleasley Vale and Hardwick Hall would strengthen the spatial relationship with the Country Park and the overall offer across the whole of the Pleasley Hub.

The target outcome will be a destination that provides a coherent, compelling and deliverable mix of products, with good governance, that: can attract more visitors for longer, engage communities and encourage participation in their landscape and heritage, that can build a regenerative economic model to sustain and support the growth of social and natural capital, to underpin the value of the area and the destination.

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[14] The Vision also wishes to establish that the area will be known as a premier outdoor cycling and walking destination of choice, where visitors will receive a genuine welcome and enjoy outstanding experiences of our countryside and heritage. The area will have an enhanced reputation with and support from its neighbouring destinations, who appreciate and benefit from its complementary offer.