

**ENJOY
TEES VALLEY**

TEES VALLEY DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021-2026



THE VISION

Over the next 10 years the Tees Valley will become a place where the visitor economy makes a substantial contribution to economic growth, jobs and the quality of life for people who live here, as well as being an attractive destination for visitors.

This Destination Management Plan (DMP) will guide activity over the next five years, moving the region closer to achieving that goal. The journey begins by investing in our places and the experiences we offer and by shouting proudly and clearly about what and who we are.

The Tees Valley is a place which values its heritage but is looking forward. A place which tells the stories of its past and its future. We want to be seen as bold and ambitious, a place not afraid to try things out.

As a relatively new destination we have a fantastic opportunity to create our own image. We are not a conventional tourism destination and we can make a virtue of that for a market that is hungry for new, intriguing, undiscovered places to visit and explore. We are not a destination for

everyone – but that’s fine – we know who is likely to ‘get us’ and that’s who we’ll be targeting.

We face some strong competition from our more established neighbours but we can offer something different and complementary.

Our geography is based around the mighty River Tees and the North Sea coastline which have shaped our history, our landscape and our townscapes. Water – river and coast – is relevant to all parts of the region and helps unify the Tees Valley as a destination. It also helps locate and differentiate it in the mind of the visitor. Water is a powerful attractor and challenges perceptions of post-industrial landscapes and can be used in subtle and nuanced ways to support our identity and positioning.

More pragmatically, it provides a focus for new visitor experiences and activities – walking, cycling, adventure sports, events or simply relaxing or having fun.

Looking ahead, the Tees Valley will be known as somewhere to get active; to pursue favourite activities or learn something new, take part or challenge yourself.

We will also be a place for family entertainment, year round, whatever the weather. From heritage attractions and museums with a national reputation, to festivals, events and the latest in mainstream entertainment.

The range and depth of our cultural experiences will be a particularly important reason to visit, helping visitors understand this place and its people,

as well as being surprising, inspiring, thought-provoking and enjoyable.

The towns of the Tees Valley will be recognised as great places, each with a unique character that makes visitors want to explore and stay longer. They will be welcoming, animated and lively into the evening with a wide choice of quality and distinctive eating places and accommodation.

Above all we are striving to be a sustainable destination, reducing environmental impact with an outstanding public transport network and innovative businesses. More of the money visitors spend in our shops, restaurants, and accommodation will be retained locally, and directly benefit our communities and our businesses.



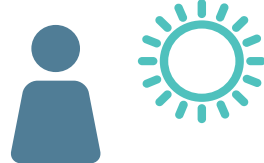
TEES VALLEY NOW



9,694 full-time direct jobs



£1.018bn spend



20.24m visits
Day visits = 18.05m
Staying visits = 2.19m

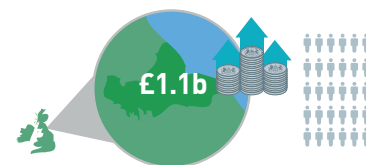


Day visitor spend = £27.26
Staying visitor spend = £169.23

STEAM Data 2019

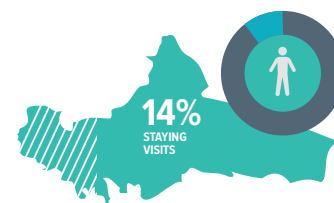


GROWTH TARGETS



Growth – The annual economic impact of the visitor economy to grow by £100m to £1.1bn against 2019 levels

Jobs – Employment to grow by 1,000 full-time equivalents (2019: 9694)



High Value Visitors – The proportion of staying visits to rise from 11% to 14%

Spend by Day Visits – Average spend to move to 85% of the England average (2019: 70% £26.01)



Spend by Staying Visits – Average spend / trip to move to the England average (2019: 89% £173.97)

STRENGTHS

- Friendly & welcoming
- Varied landscape
- Attractions & events
- Food & drink
- Activities
- Political ambition
- Access to markets
- 'Brown' to 'Blue / Green'
- Nature & industry contrast
- Affordability & VfM

WEAKNESSES

- Nearby competitors
- Unknown proposition
- Low spend/local markets
- Product quality and gaps
- Connectivity / cycling / walking
- River Tees under-used
- Transport (rail)
- Poor weather options
- Fragmented marketing
- Varied resourcing of tourism
- Destination knowledge

OPPORTUNITIES

- Undiscovered / 'new' destination for markets
- Business tourism
- Airport growth
- Staycations
- Development plans
- Culture & events
- River / water activity
- Food & drink
- Government funding

THREATS

- Dented enthusiasm
- Tourism skills & careers
- Investment lacking impact
- Resurgence in international holidays
- Tendency to 'talk it down' not 'up'

SPIRIT OF THE TEES VALLEY

The Tees Valley has a new and exciting story to tell its visitors – a story of the past and of the future. It's a place which is resilient, forward-looking, investing in its towns, communities and people, in particular its cultural attractions and events. It's a place with a bit of edge to it and has heart, depth, interest and surprise. The Tees Valley is ready to meet you with a warm welcome.

Target Markets

PRIMARY			SECONDARY		
					
Fun in the sun families (children <15)	Adventure seekers (working age with children at home)	Engaged sightseers (45+ years)	Free & easy mini-breakers (city dwellers, child free)	Business visitors (discretionary and non-discretionary)	Specialist niche - Golf

Market Trends

1. Time together - travelling with and visiting friends & family
2. Activity, health and well-being – in the outdoors
3. Appeal of less visited, undiscovered places with distinctive local culture
4. Responsible and sustainable tourism

Branding & Marketing Actions

	
Develop short descriptors and a narrative which can be used consistently	Visual identity for the Tees Valley brand with associated guidelines and brand toolkit

Strategic Priorities

Activity Hubs

- The Tees Valley as an activity destination
- From expert to 'try me'
- Watersports, cycling and walking play to strengths
- Growing engagement with the natural environment

Family Experiences

- Investment in family attractions with regional demand
- Identify and market sites to potential investors
- Early stage masterplanning and infrastructure

Culture & Events

- Compelling reason to visit 'now'
- Cultural and sporting events
- Off-peak visits driven by 'year round' offer
- Dynamic evening economy
- Distinctive positioning
- Build on recent investment

Towns & Destinations

- More attractive towns
- Better wayfinding, animation & public realm
- Enhanced gateways
- Conditions for business investment
- Day into evening
- Showcase independent business / local food & drink

Strengthen Existing Experiences

- Encourage and support innovation and investment
- Improve performance of existing assets

Sustainable Tourism

- Leadership on climate change
- Sustainable destination development
- Local supply chains
- Engage visitors with natural assets and heritage
- Help people to experience the destination sustainably

Secondary Priorities

Business Tourism

- Conference marketing group of the main venues.
- Costed sales and marketing plan.
- Conference and Meetings section of the website.
- Role to deliver conference sales activity.

Food & Drink

- Strengthen supplier network.
- Itineraries/ tours of the flavours of the Tees Valley.
- Sellable experiences e.g. making and tasting.
- Explore Sustainable Food Place award to raise profile.
- Use food and drink to animate spaces and places.

INVESTMENT CRITERIA



- Generate longer-staying visitors to contribute to growth ambitions
- Deliver visitors at quieter times of the year
- Strengthen sustainability credentials and reduce carbon emissions
- Create jobs
- Increase local visitor spend – day and staying
- Benefit local communities
- Benefit existing local business – supply chain and by keeping visitors longer

DELIVERY



- Creative Place Advisory Board to oversee and monitor the DMP with sub-groups: Marketing; Sustainability & Insights; and Development
- Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet accountable for investment decisions
- Tourism industry engagement via local tourism teams and direct where none exist