EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth Destination Management Plan provides a strategic framework for capitalising on the opportunities for tourism growth in North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth over the next five years, through until 2022. It is based on an extensive programme of research and consultations undertaken by consultants ACK Tourism between January and April 2017.

The Value of Tourism to North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth

Tourism is of vital importance to the economies of North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth: in 2015, an estimated 4 million people visited the two boroughs and spent almost £200m in the local economy, which supported over 5,300 jobs. The vast majority of visitors are day visitors, but staying visitors spend almost as much.

Key Markets

North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth are strong locations for day visits by people living in the surrounding centres of population. They have a strong attractions product, with the major attractions of Twycross Zoo and Kingsbury Water Park and a range of smaller attractions, events and festivals. Their countryside areas and canals offer walking and other recreational opportunities. Hinckley, Atherstone and Coleshill attract local people for shopping, eating out, events, evening entertainment and local history. Market Bosworth and the surrounding rural area, with its attractive countryside and villages, the Ashby Canal, Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre and Country Park, Twycross Zoo and collection of other visitor attractions, stands out as a day visit destination with potential also to attract weekend break stays. Both boroughs have a good stock of hotels, B&Bs and guesthouses that are generally trading well during the week, catering for business visitors, contractors and NEC exhibitors, and on Saturday nights as a result of strong demand from wedding parties and people visiting their friends and relatives. Twycross Zoo, Drayton Manor Theme Park, the National Space Science Centre in Leicester and The National Forest generate some family break stays. Some hotels attract spa break business and golf break stays. The two boroughs also have a number of caravan and camping sites that attract regular weekend demand from local caravanners and summer demand from touring caravanners, and self-catering and glamping accommodation that is finding a strong market for weekend escapes.
The Potential for Growth

All of the indicators show potential for significant future growth in tourism in North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth, driven particularly by:

- The planned development of Twycross Zoo;
- The new Triumph Motorcycles Visitor Centre in Hinckley and the ‘Project Thor’ adventure attraction at the NEC;
- The major plans for the development of The Belfry as a resort and the opportunities for sports tourism across the area;
- The projected growth in population in and around the two boroughs, which will increase demand for day visits, visits to friends and relatives, and business related to weddings and family occasions;
- The strengthening national demand for short breaks, growing interest in weekend escapes to the country, and increasing desire to go somewhere different;
- The development of MIRA Technology Park, and the significant boost that it will give to business demand;
- The potential for the two boroughs to capitalise on current tourist accommodation development trends.

Priorities for Achieving Tourism Growth

The key priorities for achieving tourism growth in North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth are:

- The progression, and if possible acceleration, of the development plans for Twycross Zoo.
- The promotion and development of ‘Bosworth’1 as a distinct and compelling visitor destination.
- The regeneration of Atherstone, particularly in terms of upgrading its retail offer.
- The continuing regeneration of Hinckley town centre.
- Upgrading and expanding existing accommodation businesses.
- New hotels to service the growing business demand, especially from MIRA Technology Park.
- Additional rural accommodation to boost weekend capacity.
- Improving and developing existing attractions.
- The development of new attractions that can draw new visitor markets to the area.
- The development and promotion of existing events and festivals.
- The development of new events and festivals that can attract staying visitors and boost off-peak business.
- Strengthening Northern Warwickshire Tourism as a tourism business networking group.
- Stronger destination marketing and visitor information provision for Bosworth and Northern Warwickshire that is focused on encouraging exploration by local people and their visitors, and people already staying in the area for different purposes.
- Improving the marketing skills and knowledge of tourism business operators.
- Continuing to seek external funding to support and accelerate tourism growth, and maintain the commitment of the public and private sector partnership to develop the sector.

1 Defined as the rural part of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough, with Market Bosworth and Bosworth Battlefield at its core
Other actions that can contribute to tourism growth in the two boroughs are:

- The continued promotion of Hinckley by Hinckley BID supported by stronger destination marketing and the evolution of the major annual events programme.
- The progression of the already researched and planned heritage and cultural projects and reinvigoration of lapsed projects.
- Improving, developing and promoting town events and markets.
- Developing the walking and cycling product, primarily in terms of reinvigorating lapsed walking trail and cycle route projects:
- Capitalising on the canals.

While there is clear potential for significant future tourism growth in the two boroughs, growth must be achieved in balance with the interests of local people and in accordance with the adopted local planning policy framework.

North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth
Destination Management Plan 2017-2022

The Purpose of the Destination Management Plan
The Destination Management Plan (DMP) provides a strategic framework for a market-focused partnership approach to supporting tourism growth in North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth, and to inform and support private sector tourism business investment decisions. More specifically, the DMP is designed to provide a context and basis for:

- Supporting, co-ordinating and accelerating already researched, designed and planned tourism-related projects.
- Developing interventions to address the priorities for achieving tourism growth.
- The allocation of LEADER and EAFRD funding over the next two years.
- Building the case for additional funding to accelerate progress.
- Future applications for external funding as opportunities arise.

The DMP concentrates on activity that is specifically focused on tourism growth. As such, it is intended to sit alongside other town and community development programmes that will also have a bearing on the visitor economy, in particular the work of Hinckley BID in promoting Hinckley as a place for shopping, meals out, evening entertainment and events; the regeneration of Atherstone through the implementation of the Town Centre Masterplan; and the work of Love Coleshill in promoting the businesses and events in Coleshill. It will also complement the emerging Heritage Strategy that is being developed by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.

The Vision
The vision for the Destination Management Plan is that:
By 2022, tourism in North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth will have grown by 20% through the further development of the visitor product of the two boroughs and development of viable, market-focused tourism business networking and marketing groups for Bosworth and Northern Warwickshire.
**Action Programmes**

The North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth Destination Management Plan 2017-2022 comprises nine inter-related project programmes designed to achieve this vision and address the identified priorities for achieving tourism growth in the two boroughs.

**Programme 1: Attraction Development**

Actions to support the development of Twycross Zoo and other visitor attractions through financial assistance and attraction development consultancy support.

**Programme 2: Accommodation Development**

Actions to raise awareness of the opportunities for visitor accommodation development in North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth; identify and promote accommodation development sites; and support accommodation development through financial assistance.

**Programme 3: Heritage and Culture**

The progression of live heritage and cultural projects:

- Bosworth 1485 Legacy Arts Trail
- Expansion of Hinckley & District Museum
- The development of the relocated Atherstone Heritage Centre
- A Roman Mancetter display in St Peter’s Church, Mancetter
- A heritage display in St Mary’s Church, Atherstone
- The development of the visitor offer of Polesworth Abbey
- Reinvigoration of Polesworth Poets Trail
- Hinckley BID’s History Trail
- Hinckley’s annual heritage weekend.

**Programme 4: Events & Festivals**

A programme of support for the development and promotion of existing and new events and festivals in terms of advice and contacts; marketing, PR and social media support; financial assistance; and umbrella festivals, ideally delivered by a dedicated Events Officer with a reasonable working budget.

**Programme 5: Capitalising on the Canals**

A programme of projects designed to capitalise on the tourism potential of the Ashby and Coventry Canals, including the development of Hartshill Wharf as a visitor destination; the development of a stronger, integrated visitor offer in the Ashby Canal Corridor through Bosworth; and a programme to encourage canal boaters to moor up and spend time and money in the towns and villages along the canals.
Programme 6: Walking & Cycling

The reinvigoration of the Northern Warwickshire Cycleway and North Arden Heritage Trail, and the development of the Bosworth Cycle & Steam cycle route. And support for the National Forest’s initiatives.

Programme 7: Explore Bosworth Tourism Partnership

The establishment of a viable tourism business networking and marketing group for Bosworth and delivery of an ‘Explore Bosworth’ marketing programme.

Programme 8: Strengthening Northern Warwickshire Tourism

A membership recruitment drive for Northern Warwickshire Tourism and implementation of an ‘Explore Northern Warwickshire’ marketing programme focused on encouraging exploration of the area and visits to its attractions by day visitors and people staying in accommodation establishments in and around Northern Warwickshire.

Programme 9: Tourism Marketing Workshops

A programme of bite-sized marketing workshops for tourism businesses to help them to improve their marketing.

The DMP includes programme outlines, setting out the objectives, rationale and scope of each programme. Indicative budgets have also been included for some projects, but further work will need to be undertaken to cost up projects as funding is identified.
Delivery

The DMP comprises an ambitious set of programmes, each consisting of a series of projects. Some of the projects are already being progressed by the economic development teams of the two borough councils, particularly in terms of their joint work on the England’s Rural Heart LEADER Programme, but also in terms of other projects that they are leading on. The County Council economic development teams are also progressing a number of programmes that could incorporate some of the DMP projects, particularly in relation to town centre development.

Staff Resources

The LEADER Programme is providing funding for a consultant to work two days a week on the implementation of the DMP for a year from May 2017. This consultant will take on the role of a Tourism Link Officer as a shared staff resource for North Warwickshire and Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Councils, focusing on the implementation of the following three DMP programme:

- Programme 7: Explore Bosworth Tourism Partnership
- Programme 8: Strengthening Northern Warwickshire Tourism
- Programme 9: Tourism Marketing Workshops

In order to further progress the delivery of the DMP, after the initial period of one year, it is hoped that further funding can be secured to continue to employ a shared Tourism Link Officer, either on a full or part-time basis. The opportunity could be explored to extend this arrangement to incorporate Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, as part of the overall Cross Border Partnership arrangements.

Co-ordination

An annual DMP conference will be held to co-ordinate delivery, providing the lead agencies for each DMP programme and project with the opportunity to give a progress update. If needed, more frequent conferences, or sub-conferences will be organised.

Measuring Success

The impact of the DMP on tourism growth will be assessed in terms of visitor attraction development, attraction visitor numbers, and visitor accommodation supply growth. Tourism economic impact assessments will also be undertaken every third year, using the Cambridge or STEAM Models.