



Tourism Vision 2016 - 2019



Rutland
County Council

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Executive Summary

It is clear that tourism has progressed substantially since the creation of Discover Rutland in 2007 and a lot has been achieved in both destination management and destination promotion.

The three primary objectives from the 2012-2015 have in part been delivered;

1. Recognise and enhance the Rutland offer
2. Identify, attract and satisfy Rutland's key audiences
3. Ensure a Sustainable Future for Tourism in Rutland

Growth in economic impact, sector employment and visitor numbers have seen an increase, with 2015 STEAM data showing the value of tourism in Rutland being £113.05million (up 6.7% on 2014), supporting 1,601 full time equivalent jobs (up 1.9% on 2014) and visitor numbers rise to 1.75 million (up 9.8% on 2014).

The 2016-2019 Tourism Vision aims to build on its successes by developing the past achievements, extending the tourism season, continuing to work with key partners and updating marketing platforms. The vision also tackles new ways to work, responding to the change in tourism officer hours, including a restructure of the Discover Rutland Tourism Committee and an increase in partnership working.

The Discover Rutland Tourism Committee now contains a Management Committee of 6 members, each responsible for the delivery of 6 key areas:
Events | Finance | Guides & literature | Membership | PR & Marketing | Website

The target objectives for the 2016-2019 tourism vision focuses on three modified objectives from the previous vision:

- 1. Stimulate and support the Rutland offer**
- 2. Recognise and attract Rutland's key audiences**
- 3. Ensure a Sustainable Future for Tourism in Rutland**

Introduction

Rutland has many accolades which makes it attractive as a tourism destination. Being England's Smallest County is a claim that draws attention and makes it appealing as a traditional English, quaint location. Rutland is also England's most Rural County (Office for National Statistics) which recognised the beautiful countryside on offer and highlights the market towns being the hub of the county, rather than a city. Annually, tourism in Rutland attracts over 1.75 million visitors, it is worth around £113.05 million and directly supports over 1,600 jobs (STEAM, 2015), making it a key economic driver in Rutland.

Brief Background

Discover Rutland has come a long way since it was established in 2007. Prior to this the county was marketed alongside Leicestershire through Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd, with support from a Rutland Tourism committee, made up of local business representatives.

As a result of a Section 106 Agreement between Rutland County Council and Anglian Water in 2007, a sum of almost £500,000 was given to Rutland County Council to support tourism, in instalments over 5 years. This agreement was to offset any negative impact on tourism, by works being carried out at Rutland Water during the 5 year period, and was used to employ two full time tourism officers to write and delivering against a tourism strategy aimed at raising the profile of Rutland as a tourism destination between 2007-2012.

A proactive Discover Rutland Tourism Committee was formed, which continues to be an essential part of Discover Rutland's successes. An effective working relationship with Visit Lincolnshire was established, which provided the technical support and advice needed before Discover Rutland became a recognised Destination Management Organisation in its own right in 2011.

The Discover Rutland brand was created, with a dedicated website launched in Spring 2008, and a quality A4 visitor guide in the same year. Over the 5 year period, a vast range of successful initiatives were introduced, such as the purchase of branded merchandise, creation of local leaflets and a branded marquee which the team took to shows and events around England. Discover Rutland's marketing portfolio included an advertising campaign at Kings Cross and numerous inclusions in national magazines and newspaper, in the form of adverts and articles where journalists had enjoyed a Discover Rutland itinerary. New events were also created, such as the Rutland Food & Drink Festival and the Rutland Walking Festival.

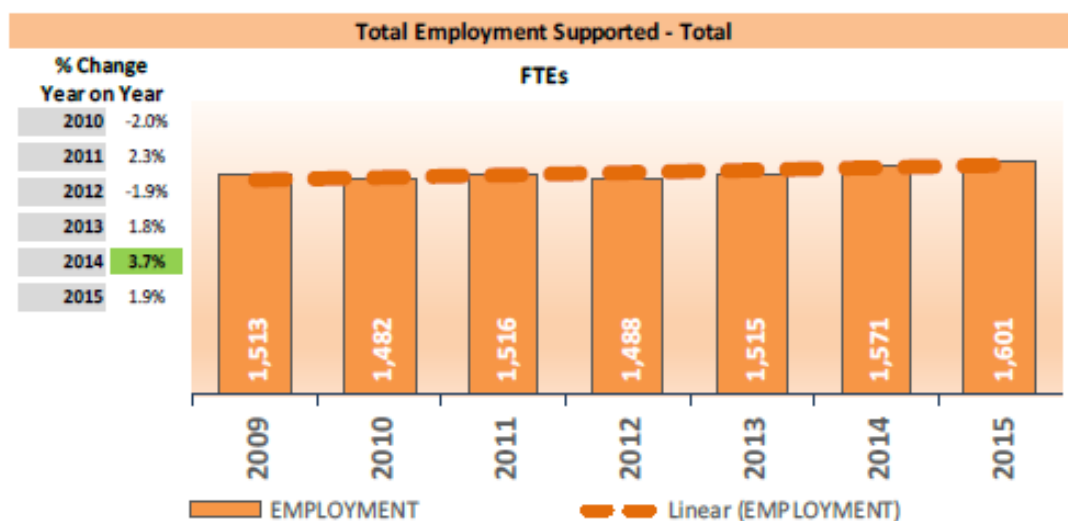
A membership scheme was created by the Tourism Committee in 2010 with the aim to make Discover Rutland sustainable post 2012.

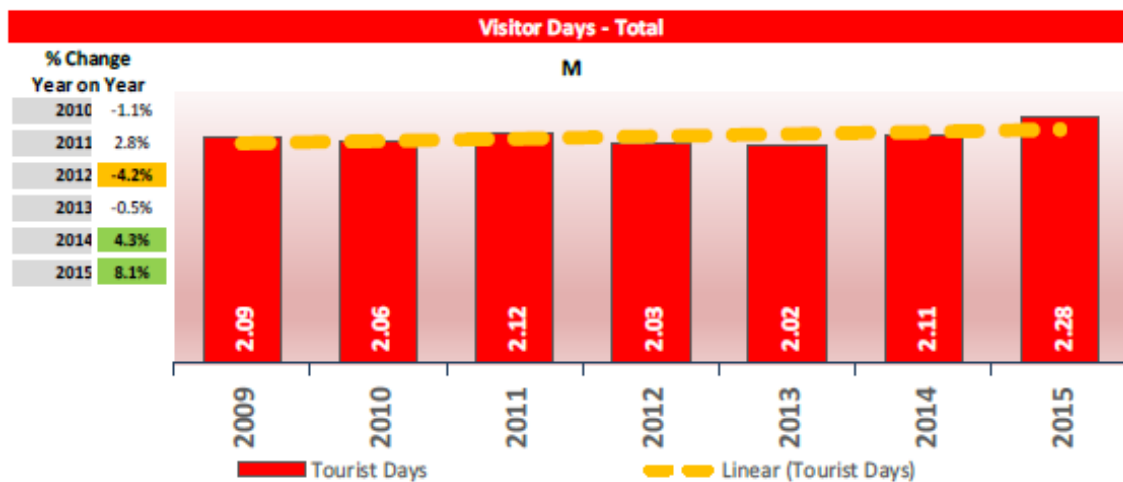
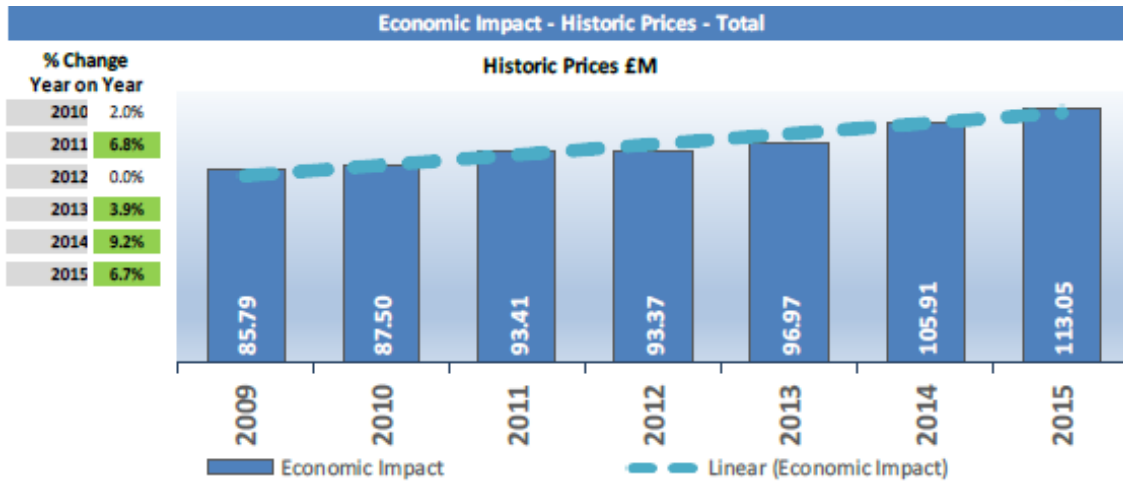
When the funding concluded in 2012, the number of Tourism Officers reduced to one full-time officer working under the direction of the Tourism Committee and the RCC Economic Development and Tourism Manager. This then reduced to one part-time officer in 2014.

Tourism Industry Statistics

Rutland, like many other counties, uses Global Tourism Solutions to provide a STEAM [Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model] report to track the tourism economic impact. The model uses a local supply of data, tourism performance and visitor survey data collection to deliver outputs which can be broken down into different sub-categories. An increase can be seen in many areas over the past seven years through the graphs below;

STEAM Data Graphs: 2009-2015





% Change from 2009	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Economic Impact - Historic Prices		2.0%	8.9%	8.8%	13.0%	23.5%	31.8%
Visitor Numbers		-2.4%	1.1%	-3.7%	-3.8%	-2.2%	7.4%
Visitor Days		-1.1%	1.7%	-2.6%	-3.1%	1.0%	9.2%
Total Employment		-2.0%	0.2%	-1.6%	0.2%	3.9%	5.8%

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How tourism in Rutland is now delivered

Rutland County Council employs one part-time time tourism officer which sits within the Places Directorate. Due to the reduction in tourism officer hours, the Management Committee was restructured in 2016 to consist of a Management Committee made up of 6 members and the full Tourism Committee which is made up of 20 members, all volunteers offering their relevant skills and range of expertise..

The Management Committee meet every six weeks for a formal meeting and each member takes lead responsibility for one of the six sub groups covering; Events, Finance, Guide & Literature, Membership, PR & Marketing, and Website, and reports on their area at the quarterly Tourism Committee meetings, as well as ad hoc meetings of the sub groups.

In addition, there is an annual Tourism Forum which takes place in November, to which all tourism providers are invited to hear about the achievements of the year and the plans for the following year. Members are also kept up to date through ad hoc communication and an industry newsletter.

Structure of local engagement



The tourism officer and tourism committee ensure the provision and maintenance of a tourism website, necessary publications, customer communication through e-newsletter and additional marketing for the county, whilst striving to give members the most value for money. The tourism officer provides a point of contact for Visit England, Visit Britain and media contacts with the aim to maintain awareness of Rutland and increase national and international exposure.

The future

It is clear that Rutland has made a significant amount of progress over the last nine years, growing from a small destination with big ambitions, to being an independent, highly regarded rural destination, aware of its strengths and using them to attract the customer base it seeks. From the very start of this process, Rutland has understood the benefits of working in partnership. The Discover Rutland Tourism Committee and

the wider tourism industry have demonstrated that by working together much more can be achieved than working separately and it is this commitment and shared desire to see Rutland do well which has helped make it the success it is today.

Moving forward, this document sets out the vision and ambitions for the next 3 years, covering the period 2016-2019. The aim is to build on the evident successes of the previous vision and strategies and provide a framework around which Rutland can further establish itself as the destination of choice for short rural breaks in the heart of England.

The Target Objectives 2016 - 2019

It is important to build on the successes of the last nine years and momentum of the county's growth can still be maintained despite the reduction on officer hours, however a different way of working will be required in order for Discover Rutland to deliver on the same scale.

Having goals for the committee and tourism officer to deliver against is an important way to measure achievements. In addition to this, each of the six new sub groups will also have their own objectives to work towards.

This three year tourism vision aims to uphold Rutland as a key tourism destination, continuing with modified versions of the 3 main objectives from the last Tourism Vision;

- 1. Stimulate and support the Rutland offer**
- 2. Recognise and attract Rutland's key audiences**
- 3. Ensure a Sustainable Future for Tourism in Rutland**

Objective 1 – Stimulate and support the Rutland offer

Rutland and the surrounding area has many aspects that make it attractive to visitors; being a rural county with two traditional market towns, rolling countryside and picturesque villages makes it appealing for relaxing breaks. Rutland also has many features which satisfy interests such as water sports, bird watching, heritage, walking and cycling. Additionally, having quality accommodation and food & drink offering benefits the county greatly, as this is something all visitors appreciate.

To help Rutland become a leading destination, the following areas could be maintained and developed

Events & Activities

- Identify new opportunities and work with partners and local event organisers to help promote events and activities in the county
- Identify short break themes to target specific audiences, such as golf and fishing
- Support off peak activities and events to broaden the season further
- Enhance and promote the areas outdoor, walking and cycle friendly attributes

Products

- Support enquiries relating to product gaps and the demand for accommodation types (e.g. large hotel, boutique, spa, camping and caravanning) and support businesses wishing to enter this market
- Attraction development: supporting all weather options and encourage joint schemes, such as the visitor passport discounts scheme.
- Engage with the development of the built and natural environment by working with the Rutland County Council planning team

- Work with Anglian Water to promote Rutland Water Park as an outstanding and unique leisure destination
- Work with neighbouring partners to enhance the Rutland offer

Assets

- Protect our key selling points, such as independent shops and restaurants
- Sell the strength of our rural escape offer and convenience Maintain and develop the successful partnership between the Discover Rutland Tourism Committee/local tourism industry/Rutland County Council
- Continue to communicate with local tourism industry
- Continue to communicate with and increase the customer database
- Build on links with Visit England and other key partners
- Encourage businesses in the area to promote Rutland to their customers

Marketing

Many of the points listed above require promotion, and in order to support the Rutland offer, awareness of it needs to be increased. Discover Rutland must therefore ensure up-to-date marketing platforms are embraced and new technologies implemented when possible. The current Discover Rutland website was built in 2010 and lacks the responsive technology needed to satisfy the customer; therefor investment in a new website is crucial within the timescale of this vision.

Objectives 2 – Recognise and attract Rutland’s key audiences

Objectives 1 and 2 are very much linked, as the Rutland offer greatly influences Rutland’s audience. Google analytics show that over 60% of the website’s audience uses mobile or tablet devices to view the information, making it imperative a responsive website is introduced.

Different audiences need different marketing approaches, despite the importance of online marketing continuing to increase; there is still an audience that relies on paper promotion. Rutland needs to ensure its promotional activity is targeted to the Rutland audience in order for it to be effective.

It must be highlighted that audiences vary on different platforms. For example, when reviewing Discover Rutland’s audience on Facebook, it is clear that the majority of fans are in the local and surrounding areas (37%), however the largest demographic of website users are from the London area (16%), therefore the marketing approach must reflect this.

Audience focus

- Market to the local audience to raise brand awareness
- Continue to target key audiences from 2 hour drive time
- Target potential special interest groups
- Build the appeal of Rutland as a year round destination
- Market experiences and themes rather than places (linking with the Visit England tourism strategy)

Online importance

- Continue to utilise new technology
- Investment in web developments to ensure the website is an up-to-date and an inspiring tool
- Continue to widen use of social media and exploit this channel to gain new customers
- Recognition of website as key marketing and communication tool
- Develop customer contacts database and ensure quality communication via e-newsletters and offers

Objective 3 – Ensure a Sustainable Future for tourism in Rutland

Since the Discover Rutland brand was created in 2007, it has grown into a recognised and respected identity for the county. To continue this growth, it is important that the work done towards tourism in Rutland is maintained, regardless of the reduction in officer hours.

There are a number of ways that the future can be protected:

Financial

- Review and grow membership of Discover Rutland
- Continue to secure funding to sustain tourism for the medium term
- Seek opportunities for other streams of funds
- Encourage investment from suitable partners, financial and otherwise
- Develop a business plan to support this vision

Integrity of product

- Signpost businesses to available training and skills development
- Support and enhance Visitor Centre services
- Expand and exploit opportunities to work in partnership with destinations which fit with Rutland
- Ensure Rutland keeps up-to-date with technological advances in marketing opportunities for promoting the county
- Ensure the quality of the Discover Rutland brand is maintained when partners are used to do work under that umbrella

Partnership Working

- Utilise skills and opportunities from local businesses to outsource suitable Discover Rutland projects, such as the visitor guide. Thus creating a low-risk method to deliver on projects whilst requiring fewer officer hours
- Continue to build links with key partners across the region with key organisations such as Anglian Water, major attractions and nationally with Visit England

- Continue to extend the catchment of Rutland to include businesses in and around Melton, Stamford, Market Harborough and other areas which would be attractive to visitors staying to Rutland
- Market short break experience using elements of partner destinations to make the offer more appealing to customers
- Encourage and organise familiarisation visits across Rutland and the wider area

Objectives for the six groups from the Management Committee

In addition to the main committee objectives, each of the six groups also has their own goals to work towards:

Events

- Celebrate the 20th anniversary of Rutland's independence in 2017
- Explore funding opportunities for local events

Finance

- Oversee the Discover Rutland finances whilst managing the profitability of the other 5 groups
- Explore funding opportunities for Discover Rutland

Guide & Literature

- Work in partnership with a marketing company to create a profitable Discover Rutland visitor guide
- Explore demand for local leaflets and map pads

Membership

- Evolve the membership scheme to become simpler and more attractive
- Encourage and grow the membership database offering value for money

PR & Marketing

- Increase local exposure with press releases
- Explore funding opportunities for marketing projects, such as the Discover England Fund

Website

- Ensure the Discover Rutland website is brought up-to-date by creating and maintaining a new, responsive, website with income generation
- Manage online data to provide useful and current local information for events, attractions, accommodation and places to eat

Partnership Approach

The Rutland Tourism Vision reviewed the objectives of the following organisations when developing its own objectives to ensure an achievable and concurrent approach.

Government

The UK Government published a Tourism Action Plan in August 2016 after the British people voted to leave the European Union. The plan includes new initiatives and measures to help Britain compete as a major tourism destination for both international and domestic markets. The Governments priorities are;

- **The tourism landscape:** strengthening co-ordination and collaboration
- **Skills:** boosting apprenticeships and attracting more people to careers in tourism
- **Common sense regulation:** examining the scope for deregulation
- **Transport:** making it easier for visitors to explore by rail, bus and coach
- **A GREAT Welcome:** driving continuous improvements in our visa service

The government recognise that over 50% of inbound spending happens in London and aims to encourage visitors to travel beyond the capital. A £40 million Discover England Fund has been implemented to strengthen regional tourism.

Discover Rutland will strive to keep the industry updated on relevant changes that may affect them, and also work towards benefitting from the Discover England Fund.

The government have already invested over £130m in campaigns such as the Great Britain branding and in Visit Britain overseas campaigns taking advantage of the global interest in the Diamond Jubilee and the 2012 Games

The Governments Strategy “Delivering a Golden Legacy: a growth strategy for inbound tourism 2012-2020 builds on this work and set out what Britain can do to ensure that international tourism delivered the largest economic benefit possible with the aim of attracting 40 million international visitors a year spending £31.5 billion by 2020 (in 2015 the UK attracted 36.1 million international visitors and spending was at £22.1billion).

VisitBritain/VisitEngland

VisitBritain/VisitEngland plays a unique role in building England’s tourism product, raising Britain’s profile worldwide, increasing the volume and value of tourism exports and developing England and Britain’s visitor economy.

VisitEngland activity is currently focused on the development and delivery of the Discover England fund, announced by the Government in November 2015, which aims to drive inbound visits and spend and support the domestic market through the delivery of world-class, stand-out, bookable tourism products.

VisitBritain's extensive network connects the UK with a global audience across four regions - Europe, the Americas, Asia, China and North East Asia – serviced by offices around the world.

Rutland County Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020: Rutland is a great place to live, learn, work, play and visit.

Rutland County Council is working towards a number of corporate priorities with the vision to develop the area as a place where people choose to live, work, play, and visit.

Having a successful tourism industry in Rutland impacts on all aspects of this vision:

Live – a thriving tourism industry creates a county which is attractive and vibrant with things to do and ensures the areas beauty is maintained which creates pride from the current residents and encourages interest in the area as a great place to live.

Work – the tourism industry in Rutland supports over 1,601 full time equivalent jobs (STEAM 2015) both directly and indirectly. This makes it the fourth largest employer in the county (Rutland Key Statistical Data November 2016). In addition to employment in the tourism industry, having a prosperous county makes other jobs in the area more attractive due to the desirable location.

Play – Tourism amenities, whilst attracting visitors, are also great facilities for local residents to use in their leisure time.

Visit – In order to attract visitors to the county, there need to be things to entice them, such as quality accommodation, attractions, place to eat and things to do.

Tourism is imperative to the latter two objectives of the Rutland County Council vision. Both 'play' and 'visit' rely on tourist facilities in the area being available for both residents and visitors alike.

Anglian Water

Anglian Water has identified three key areas to ensure the development and quality of their recreational sites [including Rutland Water Park]:

1. Working in partnership to increase the promotional and financial return from our parks by developing the number and type of events hosted and the range of activity offered.
2. Refurbish, revitalise and define the most effective use of our current recreation buildings to improve the customer experience and increase stay periods, repeat visits, visitor spend and satisfaction.
3. Develop new park activities and attractions to promote and encourage increased visits. Creating a unique 'sense of place' to distinguish our parks from our competitors.

Anglian Water is currently investing heavily in enhancing the tourism offering at the Rutland Water Park, this is demonstrated in the appointment of a Park Manager and also an Events Manager. Part of their Rutland Water Park Development strategy has included the refurbishment and re-launch of the Rutland Water Visitor Centre and creating a miniature golf course and bathing area at Sykes Lane. Summer 2016 saw the launch of an inflatable aqua park at Whitwell Creek.

This tourism focused development around the Rutland Water Park is encouraging for the tourism offer in Rutland and it is important for Discover Rutland and Anglian Water to have a close relationship in order to assist each other in achieving their objectives.

Supporting Documents

Supporting documents can be found on the following links:

Rutland's STEAM data:

<http://www.discover-rutland.co.uk/information/tourism-trade>

The UK Governments Tourism Action Plan:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tourism-action-plan>

Rutland County Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020:

http://www.rutland.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/our_corporate_plan.aspx