

North Norfolk Visitor Economy 2019 - Update

Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the activity with which the council and its partner organisations are undertaking in support of the visitor economy.

Background

The Corporate Plan, under the priority of supporting jobs and the local economy, states we will: “*capitalise on our tourism offer both inland and along the historic coast by encouraging a private sector lead to tourism promotion with support in developing a strong brand.*”

The Visitor Economy (direct, indirect and induced) has maintained a dominant role in contributing to the local economy since Victorian times. The latest figures show that a staggering 8,827,000 visitors came to the North Norfolk District in 2017 (6.2% up on the previous year) generating a total value of £505,109,250 to the local economy. Moreover, figures for 2017 suggest the sector supports 8164 local FTE jobs (3% increase on 2016), accounting for 28.4% of local employment (direct & indirect).

Visitors make a choice about where to spend their holidays and leisure time and that choice is informed by either their knowledge or their impressions of a destination and what it has to offer. A destination is often not defined by physical characteristics (as could be argued by for example the Broads or the city of Norwich) but by a set of attributes that are geographically linked, accessible from one another or in some other way offer a coherent ‘package’. Often this will involve a mixture of: attractions (landscape, beaches, heritage assets, commercial attractions etc.), visitor facilities, accommodation, transport infrastructure and hospitality or food and drink establishments; the way in which these relate to one another and interact is what helps define a destination. A destination is as much about an *impression* as merely a location and that is created and reinforced by the actions of the people in that destination and the way in which the messages are ‘sold’ to those it is hoped to attract. There is no doubt that destinations are at the core of establishing a coherent tourism offer and consequently a flourishing visitor economy.

Visit Britain (responsible for marketing the country as a destination) recognises the importance of establishing a common purpose and emphasises the need to collaborate, thus “*offering compelling destinations of distinction*”. Great destinations are those that:

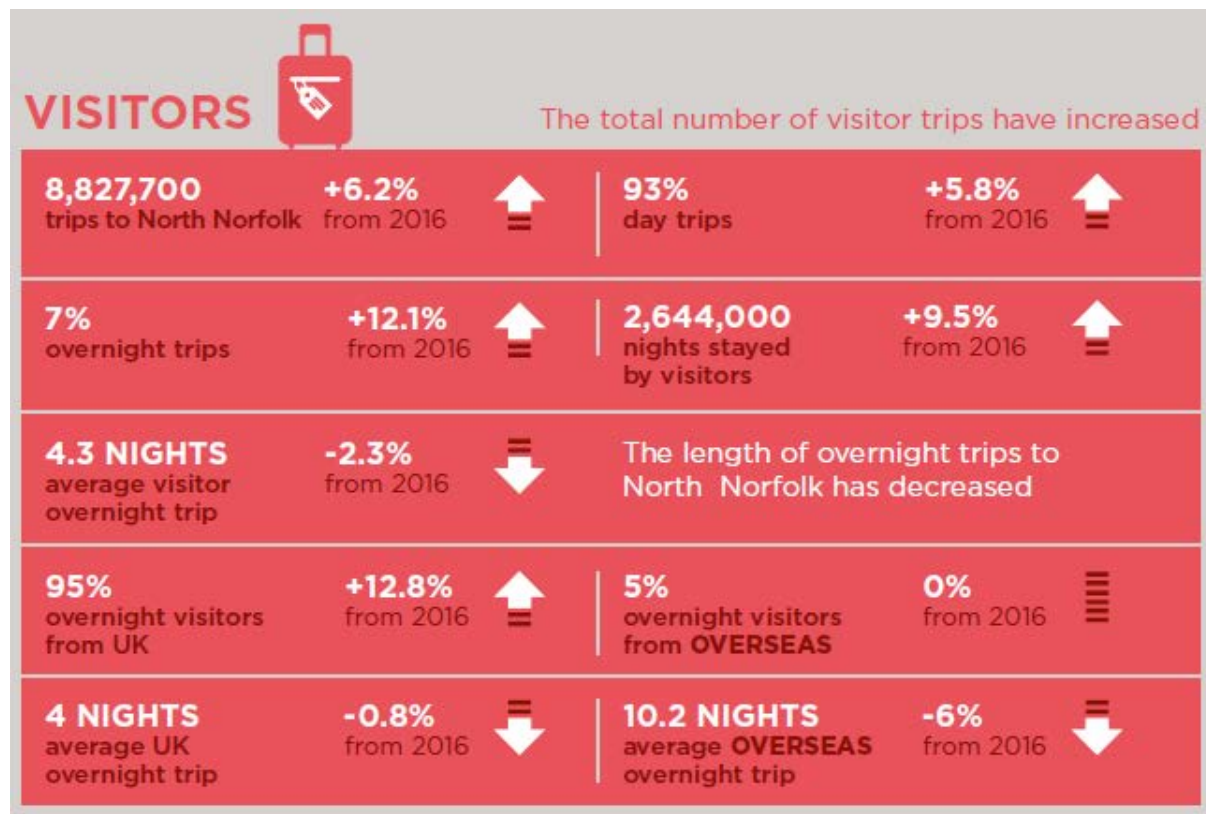
- Deliver strong and slick promotional campaigns
- Provide a quality experience
- Have a fantastic product
- Have a collaborative industry

Creating a destination and sustaining its brand takes a good deal of effort and that involves not only those who work in the tourism industry, but those involved in other service sectors (such as public transport and public service sectors) and also residents of the area (displaying social capital through local culture and civic pride). Great

destinations are thus great places to live and work as well as to visit. If they are well managed, they are more likely to generate 'productive growth' in the visitor economy, maximising the benefits of that growth in long term, additional income and jobs. The best-managed destinations can also attract new investment, keep value-added jobs, bring in new talent and stimulate innovation, maximising the benefits of that growth in the long term through additional income and productive jobs.

Contribution to the North Norfolk Economy

The Economic Impact of Tourism report examines the volume and value of tourism and the impact of visitor expenditure on the local economy, providing comparative data against previously published data. The 2017 report provided yet more evidence of the confidence that remains within the sector and the contribution it continues to make to the North Norfolk economy.

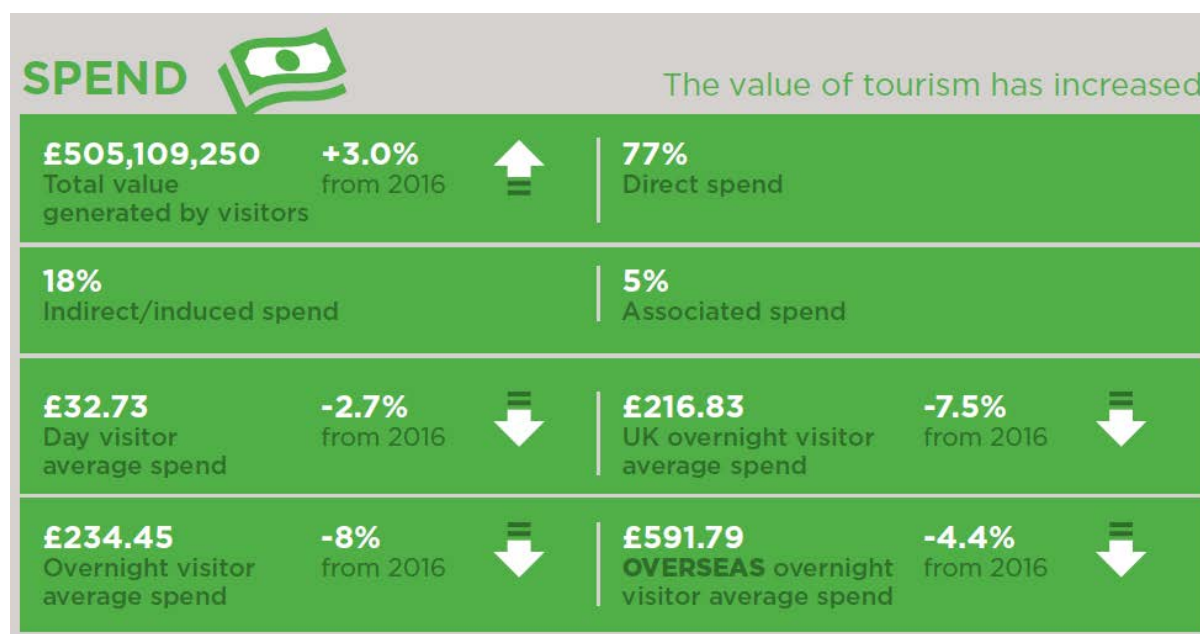


In 2017, British residents took 104.2 million overnight trips in **England**, totalling 299 million nights away from home. The number of domestic trips was 5% higher than in 2016, and nights were up by 4% compared to the 2016. Holiday trips in England in 2017 increased by 9% compared to 2016, with 48.9 million trips recorded. In terms of overseas visitors the number of visits in 2017 grew 4% to a record 39.2 million, after several years of growth since 2010.

The East of England region experienced a 3% increase in overnight trips during 2017. Bed nights were up by 13% on 2016 and expenditure was also up by 13%. This resulted in an increase in the average length of trips (the number of night per trip) from 3 nights per trip in 2016 to 3.3 in 2017. The number of overseas trips to the East of

England in 2017 was unchanged at 2.4 million overnight trips. The total number of nights was down by 2% to 16.1 million. Spend was down by 4.5% to £815

Locally a total of 8,827,700 trips were made to North Norfolk in 2017 (an increase of 6.2%). Day visits still represent the majority of trips (93%), however, the number of nights stayed by visitors has increased by 9.5% on 2016.



Nb 'Indirect spend' is the changes in spend in sectors within the District that supply goods and services to the direct tourism sector. 'Induced spend' is the increased sales within the District from the household spending of income earned in the tourism and supporting sectors.

On a **national level** the largest proportion of visits were taken to destinations in England (1,505 million visits or 84% of the total). The distribution of expenditure during visits broadly reflects this pattern, with a total value of day trips to England totalling £50.9 billion (81.5% of the total for GB). For overseas visitors, the value of spending increased by 9% to £24.5 billion. Average spend per visit was £7625 in 2017, up from £599 per visit in 2016.

During 2017, the volume of tourism day visits in the **East of England** decreased by 5% to 133 million. However, spend was up by 10% to £3.85 billion. Of those staying overnight, the average spend per trip was up from £159.53 in 2016 to £175.54 in 2017. The region received more visitors in 2017 than in the previous year and, most significantly, they stayed for longer, which resulted in greater average expenditure levels per trip. For overseas visitors, the total number of nights was down by 2% to 16.1 million. Oversea visitor spend was down by 4.5% to £815 million in 2017.

North Norfolk saw a 3% increase in total spend (£505,109,250). However, the average spend actually went down, suggesting that the increase in the volume of visitors has largely accounted for the uplift in total spend.

Visit North Norfolk

Destination management organisations (DMOs) are organisations charged with representing a specific destination and helping the long-term development of the local tourism economy through targeted and strategic campaigns.



Visit North Norfolk (VNN), a not-for-profit company, is North Norfolk District Council's commissioned official tourism partner, and is affiliated with Visit East Anglia and Visit Norfolk. VNN is also the accredited authoritative DMO for North Norfolk, affiliated with Visit Britain and Visit England. Income generated through the DMO, goes back into the company, predominantly to fund its core costs which includes the employment of a Brand Manager.

Visit North Norfolk supports two key aspects of the local tourism industry:

- The promotion and marketing of north Norfolk to consumers, raising the profile of north Norfolk as an all year-round holiday destination.
- Support for businesses: representing businesses on the VNN website and providing marketing opportunities, to help them achieve a higher profile than they would alone.

Visit North Norfolk was established in 2013 as the DMO for an area loosely defined as northern Norfolk (which is deemed to be the coherent destination encompassing the administrative area of NNDC, the western part of the Borough of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk and the fringes of those areas, perhaps deemed to extend towards Norwich in the South and Gt Yarmouth in the East). Arguably Gt. Yarmouth, Norwich and Kings Lynn are each definable tourist destinations in their own right, as are the Broads and the Brecks, and as such all have their own approaches to destination management (and marketing). Visit Norfolk (VN) acts in a more strategic sense as the DMO for the county, bringing together each of the local areas and seeking to foster cross boundary collaboration and coordination of messages.

VNN has established and promoted the destination's brand and has developed a successfully performing website which continues to act as the predominant pre-visit gateway for those interested in exploring or staying in the area. They have also developed a number of marketing campaigns which have achieved great results. VNN also facilitates collaboration between the tourism businesses operating in the area (large and small) through networking events and other means of communication. VNN plays a vital role in promoting the destination amongst media outlets and is the key point of contact for any organisations seeking to find out what the area has to offer (e.g. by hosting familiarisation trips for national media). The VNN Board consists of some of the key players in the local tourism industry and maintains contact with others within the sector and other destinations nationally.

NNDC (together, to a much lesser extent, with BCKLWN) helped establish VNN, financially supporting the organisation in its first three years, and more recently by helping to fund marketing campaigns. No other local authorities currently fund or support VNN, although nearly all Norfolk Authorities now support VN. VNN also had a substantial injection of funds from local private sector businesses during its establishment and it has since been further supported financially by them and by sponsorship, paid advertising and by a membership funding model. It has been recognised that the current funding model for VNN appears to be working well with VNN successfully meeting its core costs through earned income and by acting as a commissioned partner to deliver marketing campaigns that are funded by NNDC and business sponsorship.

VNN's recent marketing campaign, 'North Norfolk, Naturally' is an eleven month campaign featuring ten new thirty-second films focusing on the unique aspects of North Norfolk. To date the campaign has received over half a million film views since it launched in June 2018. The first year of the campaign ends in April and the second year begins in May. VNN is about to begin the creation of six new thirty second videos over the coming months. The six new films are themed:

Family First in North Norfolk - promotion date May and June 2019
Promoting north Norfolk as a family holiday destination ahead of the last-minute booking period.
Sea for Adventure - promotion date July and August 2019.
A day enjoying the coast and beaches - above and below sea level. Highlighting experiences.
Feed the Soul - promotion date September and October 2019
Activities that are good for the soul. Walking, cycling, food.
Wild About North Norfolk - promotion date November and December 2019
Winter wildlife & nature.
Passing the Time in North Norfolk - promotion date January and February 2020
History & heritage, arts & culture
Beautiful North Norfolk - promotion date March and April 2020
Aerial shots of the coast & countryside - from coast to countryside to towns & villages

Deep History Coast

What is the Deep History Coast?

Deep History is a term increasingly used in place of the term 'pre-history' and has been coined to reflect the idea that the deeper you go down, the older things get!

The 'North Norfolk Deep History Coast' specifically refers to 34km of Norfolk coast located between Weybourne and Cart Gap, (Happisburgh). It is considered to be the best place to study Ice Age geology in the UK.



Norfolk's Deep History Coast is an area that embraces the whole of this coastal county, including the Bronze Age 'Seahenge' near King's Lynn. In the context of this initiative, North Norfolk's 'Deep History Coast' refers to the timeless aspect of North Norfolk coast's evolution. Happisburgh is the oldest archaeology site in northern Europe, and West Runton revealed the largest and most complete mammoth skeleton ever found in the UK.

The soft clay cliffs of this part of Norfolk's coast are one of the fastest receding coastlines in Europe. As soon as they appear, new finds can be worn down or buried; leaving archaeologists to do their work in a race against time and tide.

Finds on the Deep History Coast have provided the earliest evidence for human occupation so far discovered in northern Europe. They place early humans here in Norfolk some 350,000 years earlier than had been thought, at over 800,000 years ago. They also inform and provide a focus for the emerging story of Doggerland – an area of land, now lying beneath the southern North Sea, which connected Great Britain to mainland Europe during the last Ice Age.

The Deep History Coast project will see Norfolk clearly claim its position as storyteller and voice of authority for the emerging, internationally significant and iconic stories of Doggerland and the early human occupation of northern Europe.

Why should we promote the Deep History Coast?

In 2013 a report called 'Building Cultural Tourism in New Anglia' was commissioned by New Anglia Cultural Board. It includes an excellent overview of cultural tourism by Charles Landry and tells us that cultural tourism now represents 40% of the visitor market. Its pages make clear the Deep History Coast's potential as a cultural tourism destination and provide vital intelligence and inspiration.

So far very little has been done to exploit this for anything other than academic purposes - no dedicated exhibition on the subject currently exists, meaning very few

people are even aware of what is on their doorstep. By growing a coherent and lasting brand identity based on the Deep History Coast theme, existing assets and attractions can be coordinated, new projects can be developed (with the creation of new jobs, infrastructure and cultural identity) and it will hopefully reinvigorate and sustain investment in existing businesses in the area, cognisant of the role the heritage and the beauty of the area can provide.

Establishing and marketing our destination will support economic growth and long-term investment in north Norfolk, and in the wider region.

Who will it benefit?

Whilst the principle attraction is the coast (between Cart gap and Weybourne), the key beneficiaries of this initiative will be those living and doing business in communities throughout the District (and beyond). This project aims to increase its reach to an increasing network of interests and local businesses, acting as ambassadors for the area. The ultimate outcome of this initiative is to attract and promote investment in the area for the benefit of our local economy.

The Project

In 2016 NNDC committed £500k to kick start this initiative and help to improve the success of subsequent funding bids.

The outputs from this initial funding were to:

- Install a Deep History Coast themed trail along the coast
- To develop and implement a marketing and branding strategy
- To develop digital content to support the initiatives
- To undertake marketing and communication campaigns
- To create a network of Ambassadors to provide an enhanced visitor experience
- To help promote other related initiatives and opportunities

The Council has made extensive efforts to raise additional funding to support the project. NNDC successfully bid for an additional £100k (via a LEADER grant) for the Deep History Coast 'app' which is currently in the final stages of development. This app will help to bring the DHC alive and will include the latest in augmented reality. In addition, NNDC has recently been advised that it has been successful in a bid to the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) for the refurbishment and repurposing of the North Norfolk Information Centre in Cromer which will serve as the Deep History Coast 'Discovery Centre'.

In 2020 the Council hopes to organise its first Coastal marathon event close to the Deep History Coast route – themed the 'Mammoth Marathon'. This will help to promote the project but will in itself also attract large numbers of visitors to the area, with the potential for repeat visits.

Marketing The Deep History Coast

As the DMO for North Norfolk, VNN have developed and will lead on the marketing campaign. The VNN website will become the official visitor website for the Deep History Coast.

The aim of the campaign is that it will appeal to both local people, new visitors and repeat visitors.

NEW VISITORS	REPEAT VISITORS
<p>Open the eyes of new potential visitors to an extraordinary array of world leading, totally unique prehistoric assets that sets (North) Norfolk apart from anything else in the country (and the continent); helping to boost local businesses as we introduce new visitors to the area.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Use the Deep History Coast as a first step into discovering everything else that North Norfolk has to offer: beautiful beaches, wildlife reserves, market towns, places of historical interest.</p>	<p>Show visitors who are familiar with North Norfolk, a whole new side they didn't know existed. Highlight the new attraction of the Deep History Coast and help build an itinerary of activity that is relevant to them, eg walking, running the marathon, family events.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>A reason to come back for a repeat visit/s. There is plenty to see and do on the Deep History Coast as well as throughout North Norfolk.</p>

This will be delivered and supported by:

- Creating inspiring experiential films to appeal to all audiences – explaining where and what the Deep History Coast is, and how to enjoy it, what there is to do.
- A digital marketing campaign to reach the core target audiences as well as a general audience outreach, (social media, google remarketing, e-communication, content creation/blogs).
- Creating a community through social media engagement (Facebook and Instagram) and information sharing, who in turn become ambassadors for the Deep History Coast.
- Integrating the Deep History Coast URL (www.deephistorycoast.org/.co.uk) into the VNN website as the main portal of information - a one stop shop for all visitors where they can find places to stay, things to do, places to eat and explore more of North Norfolk.
- Working with Museum Services. Cromer Museum itself is home to many of the key remains and further remains and items of interest can be found at Norwich Castle Museum and the Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse Museum which is home to the preservation department of the NMS, and where the majority of the mammoth is kept.

- Promoting events throughout the year from fossil finding to the Mammoth Marathon, together with other events established by local organisations.
- Working with local businesses and those with keen interest to act as 'Ambassadors' of the project.