

Kirklees Tourism Strategy 2026–2029

Meeting	Cabinet
Date	13.01.2026
Cabinet Member	Cllr Carole Pattison
Key Decision	Yes - The strategy will influence investment priorities and delivery plans across multiple wards.
Eligible for Call In	Yes
Purpose of Report	
To seek Cabinet approval to adopt the Kirklees Tourism Strategy 2026–2029.	
Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Cabinet approves and adopts the Kirklees Tourism Strategy 2026–2029 • That Cabinet notes the alignment of the strategy with the Council Plan and regional priorities, including the West Yorkshire LVEP Destination Management Plan. 	
Reasons for Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption provides a clear strategic direction for tourism and will guide future activity to support Kirklees' visitor economy and the Council's approach to tourism development. • To enable regional collaboration, to attract funding and other opportunities. • To support wider aims such as economic regeneration and to enhance the perception of Kirklees as a destination. 	
Resource Implication:	
<p>The Tourism Strategy costs are being met by the Culture & Tourism services' base budget who are leading the strategy development, with the aim to redirect service resources to support delivery (one Grade 10 Officer plus £25k budget – further detail can be found in section 3.2). Further growth and delivery will be established through collaboration with the West Yorkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership and West Yorkshire Combined Authority to bring investment and expertise into Kirklees and the region to support initiatives and joint working. An approved strategy will also strengthen our case with external funders and other strategic opportunities.</p> <p>The strategy will be implemented in a way that can adjust to available resources and aims to encourage collaboration among teams and projects throughout the council, supporting both the strategy's goals and wider ambitions with partners in West Yorkshire. Currently, the council does not need to allocate any financial resources for this purpose at this time.</p>	
Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> & name	Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate Resources, Rachel Spencer-Henshall – 28/11/2025

<p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</p>	<p>Kevin Mulvaney – 27/11/25</p>
<p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?</p>	<p>Samantha Lawton – 27/11/25</p>

Electoral wards affected: All wards

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes – the strategy does not include personal data

1. Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the progress to develop a Tourism Strategy and requests its approval and adoption by Cabinet. The strategy seeks to develop the current offer in the district and links activity with the emerging Kirklees Cultural and Heritage strategies and plans. The strategy will guide future activity, investment decisions and partnership working in the visitor economy. These all play a role in delivering the Council Plan and Partnership Strategies.

The connecting point for the Heritage, Cultural and Tourism strategies is that they will all be centrally linked through telling the story of Kirklees. As the Heritage Strategy states, “Our heritage is our story; cultural activities enable us to explore those stories and tell them creatively; and tourism enables us to promote these stories and attract people to learn more about them.” Subject to approval, the Council will publish the Tourism Strategy on its website and promote it to stakeholders. In 2026, local delivery plans for culture will be co-developed with communities, which will support the shaping of tourism-related actions across the borough.

This strategy will give direction to an important area of work for the district that promotes the district to residents, visitors and businesses. Further to economic impact and improved perception of place, the work will connect to improved infrastructure and support for regeneration schemes, plus it will form part of region-wide activity to deliver a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Destination Management Plan with the other West Yorkshire authorities and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

2. Information required to take a decision

Kirklees has not had a Tourism Strategy for several years. With the significant impact which Covid had on the Tourism sector, it became apparent that a strategy was needed to help the sector recover in Kirklees. In 2023, the Government also initiated changes to the tourism management structure with the trialling of Destination Management Partnerships in some areas of the country and the development of Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs). A LVEP has been established in West Yorkshire. It became increasingly important for Kirklees to develop a Tourism Strategy in order to be clear about our priorities and fully contribute to working in partnership with other West Yorkshire authorities through the LVEP.

The first stage of producing the strategy involved commissioning The Fabl to undertake research and engage with the sector and visitors. This was funded through Gainshare funding from West Yorkshire Combined Authority. A draft strategy was written which was published for

consultation over Summer 2025. The results of the consultation have informed the final strategy (see section 4).

The strategy has been tested and received feedback from the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) and Economy & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel in its development. A draft strategy was brought to OSMC for feedback on 28th February 2025 ([Scrutiny - 28th Feb 2025 - Tourism Strategy.pdf](#)), prior to public consultation. Following the consultation, OSMC received a further report on 14th November 2025 ([Scrutiny - 14th November 2025 – Tourism Strategy](#)). The recommendation from OSMC was to pursue approval and adoption of the strategy.

The previous reports ‘Culture, Heritage and Tourism Strategies’ ([Culture-Tourism-Heritage Strategies.pdf](#) and [Culture Heritage and Tourism Strategies Scrutiny 25.11.2022 .pdf](#)) recognised there is a need to support tourism areas such as hospitality, accommodation and visitor attractions to improve the visitor experience in Kirklees and effectively support our Visitor Economy. With the investment in key visitor attractions such as Our Cultural Heart, how we promote Kirklees has become even more important in order to attract investment and visitors plus encourage local citizens to value and engage with cultural and other activities and attractions.

This strategy, with the Heritage and Cultural strategies, will bring new confidence to our offer and how we describe it. Strengths for the district have been identified as music festivals and culture, heritage, food and drink, landscape and wellbeing, screen tourism and sport. The Strategy will seek to strengthen Kirklees’ participation in the regional tourism offer working with the West Yorkshire LVEP and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA).

The West Yorkshire LVEP represents a significant opportunity for Kirklees its tourism strategy and visitor offer. As the region’s official framework for destination management, endorsed by Visit England, the LVEP provides access to national resources, funding opportunities and collaborative working to highlight the region. By aligning with LVEP objectives, Kirklees can benefit from shared expertise, regional activity and strategic investment, ensuring our cultural assets and events contribute to a thriving, sustainable visitor economy. The LVEP will help position Kirklees as an integral part of West Yorkshire’s cultural growth, enhancing our profile on a national stage while simultaneously enhancing and accelerating the ambitions of the Kirklees Tourism Strategy.

The Tourism Strategy links with the Visitor Economy and the economic activity generated by visitors including spending on services and goods such as accommodation, food and attractions. It also links to other economic impacts including job creation, infrastructure development and overall economic growth.

The strategy (Appendix 1) states the priorities and activity for the coming three years. The main emphasis is on establishing firm foundations to enable the sector to grow sustainably given that there has been little investment in and support for the sector for many years. The process of preparing a future and more ambitious strategic direction is anticipated to begin at the mid-point of the three-year cycle.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

This work is an agreed deliverable in the Council Plan 2024:

Section 4 of the Council Plan - Continue to invest and regenerate our towns and villages to support our diverse places and communities to flourish.

Engage more residents and visitors in our cultural and heritage offer and raise the profile of Kirklees by:

Publishing new strategies for Culture, Heritage and Tourism

3.2 Financial Implications

The Tourism Strategy costs are being met by the Culture & Tourism service's base budget as there is presently no budget for Tourism. This team has led the strategy development and will co-ordinate its delivery, with the aim to redirect service resources to support this work. £25K Gainshare funding was secured from West Yorkshire Combined Authority in 2022 to support the research and first engagement stage of the strategy. Officer input has been redirected from the Creative Development and Events programmes to support the development of the strategy and contribute to the development of the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) which equates to approximately £14K per year. A budget of £25k has now been established through the reallocation of budget from elsewhere in the service to support the development of activity and delivery, plus a Grade 10 Tourism Officer post will be established in 2026/27 to bring dedicated time and expertise to the delivery of the strategy at a cost of up to £53K. This is being funded by a service redesign which means staffing resources for other programmes of work within the service will be reduced. The post will form part of the Creative Development & Events team where there are natural connections with tourism activity and the Visitor Economy. Further growth and delivery will be established through collaboration with the West Yorkshire LVEP and West Yorkshire Combined Authority to bring investment and expertise into Kirklees and the region to support initiatives and joint working. An approved strategy will also strengthen our case with external funders and other strategic opportunities.

The strategy will be implemented in a way that can adjust to available resources and aims to encourage collaboration among teams and projects throughout the council, supporting both the strategy's goals and wider ambitions with partners in West Yorkshire. Currently, the council does not need to allocate any financial resources for this purpose at this time.

3.3 Legal Implications

Section 144 Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to encourage people by advertisement or otherwise to visit their area for recreation, health purposes or to hold conferences, trade fairs and exhibitions.

When exercising the Council's functions, Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty replacing the previous duties in relation to race, sex and disability and extending the duty to all the protected characteristics i.e. race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity and gender reassignment. The Public Sector Equality Duty mandates public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under this Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, which involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to - (a) tackle prejudice and (b) promote understanding.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
- Undertake measures to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, including, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

The strategy includes a specific aim to 'Develop Kirklees reputation for sustainability and encourage best practices in environmental process.' This will be developed with relevant Council officers and link with the Kirklees Council Environment Strategy to create relevant plans with partners. The LVEP also has a commitment to sustainability through the delivery of its plans.

3.5 Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) or Human Resources

There are no obligations in the development of the strategy and establishing the programme of work. Integrated Impact Assessments will be used to support development, with appropriate risk registers as required for streams of work and projects resulting from the strategy. [IIA-774304682](#) is associated with the strategy document.

Human Resources

There are no direct Human Resource issues in adopting the strategy.

Armed Forces Covenant

There is no disproportionate impact on the Armed Forces as a result of adopting the strategy.

Positive or negative impacts

There are no other significant implications. The adoption of the strategy results in positive activity and development for the district.

4 Consultation

Work was undertaken in 2022 by The FabI, a mix of research and public consultation, which resulted in strategy and delivery options on which the current strategy is based.

Public consultation took place in summer 2025 with support from the council's Data & Insight team. The online survey comprised of multiple choice and free text questions. The survey was promoted through Council communications and two in person drop-in sessions were hosted to provide support to complete the survey.

The consultation received 258 responses, 93% identified as Kirklees residents. Of the six areas of strength identified below for Kirklees, the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with them and the proposed plans to develop them.

- Music festivals and culture

- Heritage
- Food and drink
- Landscape and wellbeing
- Screen tourism
- Sport

The consultation highlighted some key areas of focus for respondents, some that the strategy can support directly, others that can be supported by contributing to a wider conversation around development in the district. The topics of feedback included:

- Improving communications and promotion
- Increasing inclusion and accessibility
- Strengthening travel infrastructure
- Promoting Kirklees businesses
- Developing and maintaining green spaces and active tourism
- Engaging with communities and regional partners
- Modernising cultural and screen tourism
- Improving venues and facilities
- Developing accommodation and offering a choice
- Regenerating and managing better town centres

The strategy was amended to reflect this feedback where it was not already included. Where the strategy cannot determine the direction of an area of work, e.g. regeneration and town centre management, feedback will be provided to teams leading those areas and a tourism and visitor economy voice established to support future activity.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has been consulted a couple of times about draft versions of the strategy. At their meeting on 14th November 2025, the committee commented that

- The contribution of voluntary and community sector organisations to local tourism activity was acknowledged and the promotion of events such as the Newsome Centre Local Festival and Lindley Band Oktoberfest on the Kirklees Council's "What's On" webpage was welcomed.
- It was queried under what circumstances a new Tourist Information Centre (TIC) might be considered viable in Huddersfield town centre. Whilst the current priority was to fully understand the district's tourism offer and identity, TICs were being developed in areas across the district and opportunities might potentially arise through the development of the spaces associated with the Cultural Heart.
- In respect of the financial value of investing resources into the strategy in terms of revenue for local businesses. This work was at an early stage and recognised models, such as STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) would be used to measure the economic impact going forward.
- The inclusion of town and village names within the strategy was welcomed, it was important that local identity and historical context were recognised.
- In respect of how the impact of the strategy would be measured; it was explained that the next step would be to use the strategy to produce deliverable action plans, co-produced with local communities with progress monitored against deliverable actions and supported by recognised evaluation tools.

- The feedback from the previous visit to the Committee had been incorporated into the strategy document, alongside the results of the public consultation.

The Committee recommended that

- That the Leader and the officers from Culture and Visitor Economy be thanked for presenting the draft Kirklees Tourism Strategy 2026-29 to the Committee.
- That the consideration given to the input of Scrutiny in the development of the latest version of the strategy be welcomed
- That the principles and objectives of the tourism strategy be supported.
- That it be noted that the final strategy will be submitted to Cabinet for approval within the next few months.

5 Engagement

Engagement and research over several years is outlined in sections 2 and 4 of this report. Broader engagement will continue through partnership working with tourism bodies, the West Yorkshire LVEP and the sector, guided by the Tourism Strategy.

6 Options

6.1 Options Considered

Option 1 (recommended option) – To approve the Tourism Strategy

Option 2 – To not approve the strategy, with the following potential implications

- **Loss of Strategic Direction** - The strategy provides a clear framework for tourism development in Kirklees. Without it, there would be no agreed roadmap for guiding future activity, investment decisions, and partnership working in the visitor economy. This could lead to fragmented efforts and missed opportunities for growth.
- **Missed Regional Collaboration** - The strategy is designed to align with the West Yorkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) Destination Management Plan. Failure to adopt it would weaken Kirklees' ability to participate in regional initiatives, reducing influence and visibility in the wider tourism network.
- **Reduced Funding and Investment Opportunities** - An approved strategy strengthens the Council's case with external funders and strategic partners. Without adoption, Kirklees risks losing access to regional and national funding streams, as well as private sector investment aimed at tourism development.
- **Economic Impact Risks** - Tourism contributes to local economic activity through visitor spending on accommodation, food, and attractions. It also supports job creation and infrastructure development. Without a strategy, Kirklees may fail to capitalise on these benefits, limiting economic regeneration and growth.
- **Reputational and Perception Challenges** - The strategy aims to enhance Kirklees' profile as a destination for residents, visitors, and businesses. Not adopting it could result in a weaker brand identity and reduced competitiveness compared to other districts actively promoting tourism.
- **Council Plan Delivery** - Tourism development is linked to the Council Plan's goal of investing in towns and villages and promoting cultural and heritage offers. Failure to adopt the strategy could mean non-delivery of agreed Council Plan outcomes, affecting accountability and performance reporting.

6.2 Reasons for recommended Option

It has been acknowledged previously that Kirklees has a need for Culture, Heritage and Tourism strategies, not least due to their role in economic and social regeneration. The Tourism Strategy has been developed following approval to promote and support Kirklees as a vibrant place and to strengthen our cultural and visitor offer, particularly important as we develop the regional offer with neighbouring authorities who have invested in their cultural and visitor facilities.

Furthermore, a level of responsibility exists through the Council commitment to working with our West Yorkshire colleagues at a local authority and combined authority level to deliver the West Yorkshire LVEP, as agreed through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Board, 16th March 2023.

7 Next steps and timelines

Subject to approval, the Tourism Strategy document will be published on the Council's website.

The strategy will be promoted to stakeholders and delivery of the strategy, its governance and reporting will be established by the Culture & Tourism team, through the Public Health and Corporate Services Directorate.

During 2026, Local Cultural Delivery Plans will be developed with communities through a programme of work led by the council, the University of Huddersfield (who have secured the funding for the programme) and cultural organisations. Tourism related actions will be developed in each area of the borough through this programme.

8 Contact officer

Richard Smith, Creative Development Manager
richardd.smith@kirklees.gov.uk

9 Background Papers and History of Decisions

As detailed in section 4 of this document, reports were presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Economy and Neighbourhood Scrutiny Panel on the following dates:

11th February 2021

[Culture-Tourism-Heritage Strategies.pdf](#)

22nd November 2022

[Culture Heritage and Tourism Strategies Scrutiny 25.11.2022 .pdf](#)

28th February 2025

[Scrutiny - 28th Feb 2025 - Tourism Strategy.pdf](#)

14th November 2025

[Scrutiny - 14th November 2025 – Tourism Strategy](#)

10 Appendices

Appendix 1: Kirklees Tourism Strategy 2026 - 2029

11 Service Director responsible

Adele Poppleton, Service Director for Culture & Visitor Economy
adele.poppleton@kirklees.gov.uk