

South Tyneside Destination Management Plan

2017 - 2022



South Shields Groyne Lighthouse

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South Tyneside Parade



Building sandcastles at Sandhaven Beach

Hebburn Central



Cleadon Mill



Introduction

The South Tyneside Destination Management Plan is a statement of intent that sets out how South Tyneside plans to grow the volume and value of its visitor economy between 2017 and 2022.

Providing impetus and direction, a Destination Management Plan is a key tool in delivering a successful visitor economy, a sector that is hugely important to South Tyneside and its ongoing transformation.

This Destination Management Plan will help to lead, influence and co-ordinate the management of all aspects of the area that contribute to a visitor's experience, taking into account the needs of the visitor, local residents, businesses and the environment.

The visitor sector impacts on the area in many ways. It of course helps to support businesses, creates jobs and raises the profile of the Borough, but it also celebrates the community, our culture and heritage, and raises the quality of life for local people.

South Tyneside's visitor sector comprises a range of public, private and voluntary sector businesses, all of whom have a huge part to play in ensuring it flourishes to its maximum potential.

The local authority, South Tyneside Council, is charged with managing the South Tyneside Destination Management Plan and is responsible for a range of activities, from beach management to initiating

regeneration projects, the promotion of the destination to organising cultural events. The Council manages or financially supports a number of the area's attractions and works in partnership to develop initiatives with them. South Tyneside are also part of the Northern Tourism Alliance, a partnership of North East destinations, and work with VisitEngland/VisitBritain, the national tourism agency, to further increase the profile of the area.

We have a relatively small amount of attractions but their forward thinking approach and numerous activities, many of which are in partnership, have helped to drive the visitor economy forward.

There are a number of other businesses too, many of whom are SMEs such as guest houses and restaurants, that are a key element of our visitor industry and collectively ensure a quality experience for visitors.

South Tyneside has a well-established and good quality visitor offer and recent investment has resulted in this offer going from strength to strength. There is however lots of potential for future growth and activity that can help us to attract more people to visit the area and, when they are here, have the best possible experience. This plan will help us to achieve this.



The spectacular coastline at Marsden Bay



David Baddiel at the opening of The Word



Summer Parade, South Tyneside Festival

Our Vision & Objectives

To make South Tyneside the number one visitor destination on the North East coast

Four objectives will help South Tyneside to achieve this vision. They are that by 2022:

- South Tyneside will become an established year round visitor destination.
- Day visitor numbers will have increased by 500,000 to 6 million per annum.
- Visitor spend will be worth £300 million, an increase of £20 million.
- 90% of visitors to the Borough will rate their trip as good or outstanding, an increase of 4% on current levels.

The Value of the Visitor Economy

- The visitor economy is worth an estimated £280 million to South Tyneside (2016).
- South Tyneside received more than 5.9 million visitors in 2016.
- The number of overnight visitors to South Tyneside stands at 391,000 in 2016. These visitors generated £67.74 million into the local economy.
- Around 5.58 million day visits were made to the area in 2016, which generated £212 million into South Tyneside's economy.

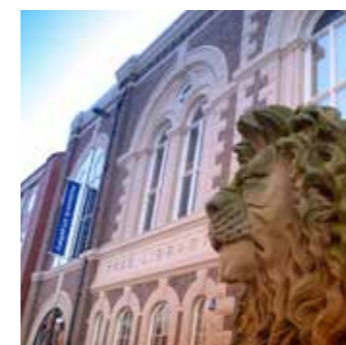
- Tourism directly supports more than 2,776 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs in South Tyneside. When indirect employment in the supply chain is taken into account total employment stands at 3,547 FTE jobs.

Source: STEAM 2016



Fun with the family at Ocean Beach Pleasure Park

South Shields Museum & Art Gallery



Souther Lighthouse

The Tourism Offer

South Tyneside is blessed with stunning natural assets, a rich heritage and a number of attractions which has made it a popular visitor destination for a number of years. Visitors in particular are attracted to the beautiful coastline, our family friendly attractions and excellent event programme.

The beautiful **South Tyneside coastline** is the backdrop for many a visit. Award-winning sandy beaches in the resort centre of South Shields lead to soaring cliffs and beautiful bays that stretch for miles. As well as amazing views, the coastline offers a great location for a multitude of activities, from surfing to cycling. The cliff path makes for a lovely mid-length walk, and a popular pastime is a simple stroll along the promenade of Littlehaven and Sandhaven Beach.

Just behind the promenade are a range of restaurants and bars for people to sit and watch the world go by, with Colmans Seafood Temple a great new addition to the mix. There's also a range of attractions for people to enjoy alongside the sandy beaches, particularly for the family market.

The North East's only seaside funfair, **Ocean Beach Pleasure Park**, has numerous rides and attractions.

Just next door is the **Dunes**, a great indoor entertainment complex which has seen major investment, as with a number of our attractions, over the past couple of years. It is home to a massive soft play area. There's a ten-pin bowling alley too, along with arcades, restaurant, pub and function rooms.

Other firm family favourites at the seafront include **Haven Point**, with its indoor swimming pools and water splash area with slides, sprays and bubbles. While pirate themed adventure awaits at **Smuggler's Cove**, a 12-hole miniature adventure golf course.

At the heart of the seafront is beautiful parkland. **South Marine Park** is much loved with a boating lake that is circled by a miniature steam railway and a Victorian restored bandstand which is the setting for regular music events in the summer. **North Marine Park** offers amazing views along the whole coastline. A location for many visitors particularly during the summer months is **Bents Park**, where on most weekends between May and September there's a fantastic event to enjoy.

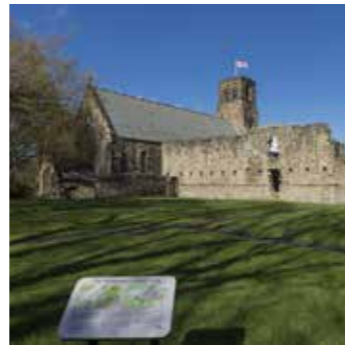
In fact the area's **events programme** is one of the key attractors for visitors to the area. Council led events include the **South Tyneside Festival**, a huge favourite with three months of music and family fun activities all of which are free to enjoy.

Throughout the year the event programme is used to encourage visitors to the area, with other events including Heritage Open Days, South Tyneside Restaurant Week and **Christmas Wonderland**.

Many other events take place by a range of organisers and include the Proper Food and Drink Festival, craft markets, The Customs House pantomime, the South Tyneside Comedy Festival and many more, all of which make a huge contribution to the visitor economy.



Kids discovering the newly opened Jarrow Hall



St Paul's Church & Monastic Site in Jarrow



One of the popular Indian restaurants on Ocean Road



Miniature steam train, South Marine Park

Of course, the area is also well known as the seaside finish of the **Great North Run**, the greatest half marathon in the world attracting thousands of runners and their families to the area every September and showcasing South Tyneside to millions of people around the country and beyond in televised coverage.

Helping to gain the area lots more coverage is **The Word, National Centre for the Written Word**, which has proved to be a huge hit with visitors since it opened in late 2016. Through rolling exhibitions and events it celebrates the written word in all its forms.

Another new addition to the area's visitor offer is **Jarrow Hall**. It offers an Anglo-Saxon Farm, Village and the Bede Museum, with something for all ages to enjoy.

Just next door to Jarrow Hall is **St Paul's Church and Monastic Site**, a working church where remarkably the chancel still stands from the 7th century.

It would have stood during the time the Venerable Bede lived here and it was from this area that he made his many writings that have changed the world we live in today, making this site a centre of pilgrimage with international significance.

As well as a rich Christian heritage we also have a strong Roman history. **Arbeia Roman Fort and Museum**, is the most extensively excavated Roman military supply base in the Empire. Built in AD160, this UNESCO World Heritage Site stood guard at the mouth of the River Tyne. Today, Arbeia is a fascinating place to visit which combines the excavated remains of the original fort with excellent reconstructions of buildings.

The area also has a strong shipbuilding and seafaring history. The first purpose built lifeboat was built in the Borough in 1789, while the second oldest preserved lifeboat, The Tyne, can be seen at the Wouldhave Memorial in South Shields' Ocean Road.

One of the very first volunteer life brigades in the country was at South Shields. Their Grade Two listed Watch House contains a unique collection of shipwreck material and lifesaving equipment.

Shipwrecks were a common occurrence along the coastline so when **Souter Lighthouse** opened in 1871 it was very welcome indeed. It was also at the time the most advanced in the world, the first lighthouse in the world to be specifically constructed for electric illumination. Today the property is operated by the National Trust and visitors can explore the lighthouse and keepers cottage, and enjoy fabulous views of the coastline from the top of the tower.

A must visit attraction to find out more about the area's history is **South Shields Museum and Art Gallery**. This free museum at the heart of South Shields Town Centre offers a range of permanent and rolling exhibitions and through interactive displays and activities tells the story of South Tyneside's fascinating history.

Another firm favourite is **The Customs House**, a cultural venue offering everything from pantos to plays, live music to comedy nights. As well as hosting national tours it is a hotbed for new and undiscovered talent.

Eating out is also a key part of the area's offer, with South Shields' **Ocean Road** in particular well known for its many Indian restaurants and Colmans Fish and Chips. Away from South Shields our other towns and villages have some popular restaurants and cafes to enjoy a relaxing lunch or evening meal.

Another attractor for the area is some fabulous and unique pieces of art and sculptures. In particular, Conversation Piece, The Sail and The Eye at South Shields Seafront are firm favourites.



Making memories at The Word

Visitor Segments

Family Fun

- Looking to spend time together as a family
- Children learn and have new experiences
- Have fun and create memories
- Visiting attractions and the outdoors, particularly the coast, is popular

Cultural Enthusiasts

- Couples and friends
- Looking for stimulating, authentic experiences with a strong sense of place
- Good market for heritage attractions and cultural experiences
- Leisure shopping, local producers and eating out are also important

South Shields Museum & Art Gallery



Conversation Piece

Target Markets

We have always been seen as a family friendly destination, and we will continue to focus on this. Parents bring their children to our attractions to learn new things and gain new experiences. They want to spend quality fun time together, building memories, as well as sandcastles, at the seaside.

Our fascinating heritage and cultural attractions are a draw for another target group, which we describe as Cultural Enthusiasts. This is another target audience we will focus our promotion and activities at and is a good fit with our existing offer.

The Word is already attracting huge numbers of Cultural Enthusiasts from far and wide to the Borough, building on those already visiting our other key attractions.

We must ensure our cultural programme continues to attract large numbers of these potentially high spending visitors.

South Tyneside is predominantly a leisure destination. Although we do receive visitors who are here on business, this is mainly those who are working in the area and staying in our accommodation rather than attending a major conference or meeting in South Tyneside.

In the last five years the area has seen overall visitor numbers increase by around 13%. The day visitor market accounts for around 90% of our visitors, most of whom are from within a 90 minute drive time of South Tyneside especially the northern parts of County Durham and Tyne & Wear. We must continue targeting day visitors, where we have seen most growth in the last few years, but also attract more overnight visitors, although this is influenced by a relatively limited capacity in accommodation. To create a real step change in overnight visitor numbers will require an increase in overnight accommodation stock.

Almost 9 out of 10 visitors (86%) rate their trip to the area as 8 out of 10 or higher. The high proportion of repeat visitors the area receives is also testament to the high levels of visitor satisfaction. We must continue to strive for excellence to ensure that visitors return, and develop existing and new products as well as enhancing our marketing to attract new visitors to the area.

By shaping our product around our current strengths and offer, and aiming promotional activity at people who like what we offer, we are most likely to retain our existing visitors and grow both the volume and value of the visitor sector.

South Marine Park



Picturesque villages



Haven Point and Littlehaven promenade



The Word

Strengths, Gaps and Opportunities in the Current Offer

Introduction

South Tyneside has a well-established and good quality tourism offer in a number of parts of the Borough. South Shields seafront in particular is well known as an excellent family destination.

Recent investment

Recent investment across the Borough has resulted in the offer developing rapidly and going from strength to strength. Examples of major projects include:

- **The Word, National Centre for the Written Word**, which has provided a major boost to the area's cultural offer since it opened in late 2016. Through a rolling programme of exhibitions, events and writers in residence The Word celebrates the written word in all its forms. This amazing new venue is the centre piece of the first stage of South Shields 365, a £100 million regeneration plan for South Shields Town Centre. It has won numerous awards for its architecture, and this stunning building also offers some fine views of the bustling River Tyne.
- **Haven Point**, a fantastic £16 million swimming pool and leisure complex, opened in October 2013 and has proved a popular indoor facility at South Shields seafront. Leisure facilities in the area have also been enhanced by the development of venues such as Hebburn Central.
- **The enhancement of the beautiful Sandhaven Beach in 2009/10** involved the development of new boardwalk areas, an improved seawall, outdoor performance space, art and sculptures, new lighting, extra seating and improved access.

- The opening of **Littlehaven Promenade and Sea Wall** in early 2014 complemented the work to the south of the pier at Sandhaven. This major project involved improving sea defences and introduced an attractive promenade with more seating and new artwork, including two impressive sculptures by artist Stephen Broadbent, *The Eye* and *The Sail*.
- The enhancement of one of our most popular attractions **South Marine Park** involved a number of improvements such as the restoration of the bandstand to its former Victorian splendour, improved street furniture, landscaping and lighting. Improvements to neighbouring North Marine Park are currently being developed.
- The development of **Harton Quays Park**, a new park which opened in Autumn 2013, stretches along the River Tyne from the ferry landing to The Customs House. It offers an attractive gateway into South Shields Town Centre and includes a new promenade, striking water feature and attractive landscaping.
- **Enhancements to South Shields' famous Ocean Road**, which provides a vital link between the town centre and the seafront, involved a new road layout and improved landscaping, including new trees with special all year round lighting.
- **The Tyne Lifeboat**, the world's second oldest lifeboat in existence and one of the North East's most important examples of maritime heritage, undertook a period of restoration in 2014. Led by volunteers from the North East Maritime Trust this included repainting the lifeboat to its original 1833 colour scheme.
- **The opening of a second Tyne Tunnel**, along with other transport schemes such as the £7.5 million scheme to upgrade the Lindisfarne and John Reid roundabouts and Leam Lane (A194), which has helped improve accessibility to the area.
- The area's **event programme** continues to be enhanced and developed with a number of major one-off events taking place and popular existing events improved. Examples include the introduction of South Tyneside Restaurant Week, the launch of a Christmas Wonderland programme of events and the continuing success of the South Tyneside Festival.
- **Public investment in the area has also been complemented by major private investment.** The Dunes have undergone major refurbishment which has included extending their hugely popular indoor soft play area and improving its dining and meeting facilities. Ocean Beach Pleasure Park continue to invest in exciting new rides and attractions that keep visitors returning, while Sandhaven Caravan Park has seen continued investment in recent years by owners Northumbrian Leisure.



A great food offer



Barbour Factory Outlet Shop



Jarrow Hall



South Shields Seafront

- **The Customs House** theatre was refurbished in 2016, which included new seating, and enhancements were made to the Green Room restaurant area.
- Groundwork STAN took over the running of the former Bede's World and launched the new **Jarrow Hall Anglo-Saxon Farm and Museum of Bede** on the site after considerable investment in the product offer.
- The opening of **Colmans Seafood Temple** on South Shields Seafront has provided the Borough with a high quality destination restaurant housed in an iconic building. This has been a huge success since opening in May 2017 and is attracting visitors, often for the first time to the Borough. This is a superb example of how investment in the public realm helps to generate private sector investment and job creation.

There has also been a huge amount of private investment in the likes of our pubs, restaurants, and accommodation providers, all of which have had an important impact on the quality of the tourism product.

Investment in the area will continue over the next 5 - 10 years and will further transform what the Borough can offer potential visitors. This presents many opportunities which are outlined in the following section of the plan along with a gap analysis where additional investment would further strengthen the depth of product offer.



Ann Cleeves author talk at The Word

Gaps and Opportunities

Visitor Attractions

The Borough boasts a number of good quality family visitor attractions and venues for those interested in heritage and culture. These include Arbeia Roman Fort, which is part of Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and is the most widely excavated Roman Fort on the former Roman Empire, South Shields Museum and Art Gallery with its excellent exhibitions of local history, Souter Lighthouse which is part of the National Trust, and The Customs House with its fantastic programme of original writing which attracts people to the Borough from far and wide.

In 2016 our visitor offer was given a major boost with the opening of The Word, National Centre for the Written Word. The programme within the main ground floor Port of Tyne Exhibition Space will host content of national significance which will link to community engagement and learning activities. The Word will provide a new home for North East writers, while on the first floor there will be a rolling programme of exhibitions taking inspiration from the South Tyneside and regional archive.

The Word has attracted visitors from across the country to South Shields. This new national centre presents a huge opportunity for South Tyneside to increase visitor numbers and raise the profile of the Borough amongst those not currently visiting. The rolling programme of exhibitions will be regularly refreshed to ensure we present compelling reasons for visitors to keep coming back.

The opening of Jarrow Hall Anglo-Saxon Farm and Museum of Bede also provides an opportunity to attract new visitors to Jarrow and the surrounding area. Further investment into the site will create a fantastic new family attraction while continuing to tell the important story of the Venerable Bede.

Souter Lighthouse has a rich history and is a popular place to visit. Further opportunities to enhance this site will help to encourage more visitors. It's beautiful and unique location makes it a great future location for hosting one-off events. As a National Trust property the attraction also benefits from national exposure through this brand.

Improvements to the quality of the visitor offer and interpretation at Arbeia Roman Fort will take place during 2016/17 and this will significantly enhance the offer and how visitors interact with the site. The visibility of the site will be improved through the implementation of a trail from the seafront through North Marine Park and from The Word through the town centre to Arbeia. This will include background on the site which should encourage visits.

In the longer term there are exciting plans to bid for funding to develop a new museum and visitor centre at Arbeia. This will engage audiences in a modern and immersive telling of the important part Arbeia played in the story of the Roman occupation of Northern England.

The newly refurbished Art Gallery space at South Shields Museum and Art Gallery will continue to deliver a programme of spotlight loans and exhibitions featuring treasures from the South Tyneside Archive.

Further investment in our attraction offer is providing many opportunities to promote the Borough to new audiences and we will look to maximise every opportunity presented by this investment.



Ocean Road



Jarrow Hall



Souter Lighthouse



Arbeia Roman Fort



The Customs House



Improved retail offer as part of South Shields 365

Target Audiences and Visitor Season

Currently the Borough is most busy during the summer season and main school holidays. There is an opportunity to extend the season through investing in our attractions and targeting new and different types of visitors. For example 'Cultural Enthusiasts' without children are most likely to visit out of season. The opening of The Word, the re-opening of Jarrow Hall and the investment into Arbeia Roman Fort all present opportunities to attract a wider audience profile.

There is also an opportunity to encourage our existing visitors to come more often by communicating compelling reasons to visit South Tyneside across the whole year.

The Customs House attracts visitors from far and wide across the year and we will continue to work together to promote their programme to all different profiles of potential visitors.

These actions will also help to increase levels of visitor spend as those motivated to visit to explore the cultural offer will often be high spending visitors who wish to enjoy food and drink and the retail offer.

Regeneration of the Borough

Millions of pounds continue to be invested in the regeneration of South Tyneside. This is improving the offer in all of our town centres, not only for Borough residents but also for potential visitors.

South Shields 365 will develop South Shields into the premier coastal destination 365 days of the year. It will join up a regenerated riverside with the seafront and newly transformed town centre retail area, making it as easy as possible for visitors to experience all that South Shields will have to offer.

Public sector investment has acted as a catalyst to create a more confident environment which is encouraging private sector investment in to the leisure offer across the Borough. This is especially improving the retail and food & drink offer, making many areas more attractive to potential visitors.

The first phase of the regeneration was completed in 2016 with the opening of The Word which is already driving new footfall into South Shields Town Centre. Future phases of South Shields 365 will result in a new transport interchange and improved retail and leisure offer including a cinema.

The upcoming Holborn Riverside Development will see a new mixed use site on the waterfront.

We will continue to promote the regeneration of the Borough through a wide range of communication channels. This will include those aimed at visitors where the focus will be on those things that are most likely to attract people to the Borough.



Crowds of 20,000+ regularly enjoy the South Tyneside Festival Sunday Concerts

Recognising our Rich Heritage

South Tyneside has a rich and proud history which dates back thousands of years. This is already a very important part of our visitor offer but we have an opportunity to share even more of this with greater numbers of visitors.

The new Blue Plaque scheme launched in winter 2016 will recognise famous buildings and the people associated with those buildings, raising the profile of the Borough's hidden gems to visitors.

We have been an active participant in Heritage Open Days for many years. We will continue to take part in this important national initiative while encouraging even more of our amazing heritage assets to take an active part.

The programme of exhibitions on the Local History floor of The Word will take inspiration from the South Tyneside Archive and get these important stories to a wide range of audiences. Jarrow Hall will also host a rolling programme of exhibitions which will tell the history of the Borough with an emphasis on the Jarrow area.

Working closely with the National Trust and English Heritage will ensure the area maximises the benefits to be gained from having properties managed by these two important national organisations.

South Shields Museum and Art Gallery will continue to engage audiences in a high quality temporary exhibition programme which celebrates local history and the strong sense of community and place demonstrated across the Borough.

We will ensure we are an equal partner in all activity across Hadrian's Wall. Arbeia as the most excavated supply fort in the whole of the empire is one of the most important sites on the Wall. The Hadrian's Cavalry wall wide programme of exhibitions and events in 2017 presented a huge opportunity to raise the profile of Hadrian's Wall and the sites linked to it nationally and internationally. Arbeia hosted two internationally significant artefacts and undertook a programme of events and these achieved national profile. We will work with TWAM and other wall wide partners to identify other similar high profile projects.

Exhibition and Event Programme

South Tyneside Festival is recognised as one of the leading free festivals in the UK. Audiences have grown massively in recent years with many events enjoying huge crowds of around 20,000.

The relaunch of the Summer Parade in 2015 gave this much loved Borough tradition a new sense of energy. Plans are in place to ensure it goes from strength to strength. In 2017 for the first time community groups from across the North East took part, making it truly an event for the region. They were joined by people who have taken part in carnivals around the world which gave the event a true Rio Carnival feel.

We will build on the number of participants and colour and spectacle to develop the Summer Parade into an established part of the regional event calendar.

The Sunday afternoon concerts in Bents Park continue to attract people from far and wide and will continue to be used to put the spotlight on the Borough. For many attending a Sunday concert is their first experience of South Tyneside, often they are so impressed they become regular visitors.

The newly refurbished gallery space at South Shields Museum has hosted two important Spotlight loans since completion of the work. Renoir's St Tropez was loaned by Birmingham Museums Trust on behalf of Birmingham City Council and this was followed up by Turner's picture of the River Tyne at South Shields on loan from Tate Britain. More spotlight loans are being targeted for the future and these will be complemented by works from the South Tyneside Archive.

The Word has in a very short period of time established itself as a leading exhibition venue. The opening exhibition celebrating the life and work of film producer Sir Ridley Scott received excellent reviews from the public and exceeded all visitor number expectations with an audience of 97,000.

This has been followed by the highly successful 'Shiver me Timbers' a Celebration of Pirates on Page, Stage and Screen. Again this family friendly exhibition is exceeding all visitor number expectations.

All of the exhibitions in the Port of Tyne Exhibition Space at The Word will be of national quality and will attract wide ranging audiences to South Shields Town Centre.

A successful programme of authors' talks, live performances, children's storytelling and creative sessions are being established at The Word and are already attracting capacity audiences from across the region. We have continued to build on this with the launch of a new writing and performance festival for the North East called WRITE. This will become an annual event and an important part of the regional book, literature and writing festival programme.

Best selling author David Baldacci at The Word



Shiver Me Timbers, The Word



New writing at The Customs House

Theatres and Cultural Programme

The theatre offer and new writing programme in the Borough is one of the strongest in the North East. Many of the new writing productions go on to tour the region and beyond, gathering new audiences and critical acclaim as they go.

Through The Word and by working closely with our theatres, Cultural Spring and our talented creative people of all ages we will ensure South Tyneside is known across the country as a hotbed of creative thinking and original ideas.

All delivery partners need to work closely with each other to attract as wide an audience as possible.

Retail Offer

South Tyneside has some very good independent retailers across the Borough, many of whom are providing a unique offer. The independent sector is particularly strong in our villages and we will continue to promote these locations to our target visitors.

However, it is recognised that investment is needed in the retail offer in a number of our town centres and this is being addressed through the Council's regeneration agenda.

As the product improves in our main town centres we will take every opportunity to promote this to potential visitors to encourage them to use and support the new retail outlets.

The development of the enhanced market offer in both Jarrow and South Shields will also form an important part of the new retail experience in the Borough.

Transport and Travel

South Tyneside is easily accessible by both road and public transport and ongoing investment will enhance this situation. Improvements to Lindisfarne roundabout and the Tyne Dock area will make it significantly easier to travel to and from the Borough. This will be particularly useful to visitors on busy days such as South Tyneside Festival concert days and the Great North Run as they tend to use major routes.

The next phase of South Shields 365 will be the new transport interchange in South Shields. This will vastly improve the experience for everyone visiting the town centre, providing a better sense of arrival and will improve how visitors move around the town centre.



Village shopping



South Shields Transport Interchange



South Marine Park

Parks and Open Spaces

South Tyneside has a huge range of gorgeous parks and beautiful open spaces to enjoy. Whilst the Leas and open coastal spaces around Souther Lighthouse at Whitburn are well known, perhaps fewer people outside of the Borough are aware of the spectacular Cleadon Hills or the Riverside Park in Hebburn or Drewetts Park next to Jarrow Hall. Increasing awareness of these areas presents opportunities to attract visitors.

The potential regeneration of North Marine Park will further enhance the offer on South Shields Seafront, complementing the lovely areas to relax in South Marine Park and promenades to explore.

A new trail through North Marine Park to Arbeia Roman Fort will not only create greater awareness of this amazing visitor attraction but will also provide another reason to visit South Shields Seafront.

Plans will also be brought forward for the enhancement of the Gypsies Green area of the seafront.

Ongoing investment will ensure these sites can be enjoyed by future generations.

Overnight Accommodation

To increase the number of high spending overnight visitors, the Borough must develop more good quality overnight accommodation. Currently the options for visitors to stay overnight are very limited. There is a need for hotel stock of all types particularly in South Shields but also the Borough would benefit from increased availability of good quality camping and caravanning, inns with rooms and bed and breakfasts.

Increased hotel accommodation provision is one of the key objectives within the South Shields 365 plan. However, uncertainty over the economic outlook as a result of Brexit may make this harder to achieve.



Eating out with the family



Enjoying a curry with friends



Event space at The Customs House

Food and Beverage Offer

There is a good quality restaurant offer across South Tyneside and recent investment is further enhancing this.

Ocean Road is well known throughout the region for its many restaurants, especially award-winning Colmans Fish and Chips and numerous Indian restaurants. Across the Borough though there is an extensive number of good quality, often destination, venues, such as Latimers at Whitburn, The Red Lion and The Black Horse at West Boldon, The White Lead in Hebburn, and the Lord Nelson in Monkton Village. Many of which provide a superb real ale, food and live music offer which is very attractive to potential visitors and can provide new reasons to visit.

The opening of the new Colmans Seafood Temple on South Shields Seafront has created a new destination restaurant for the Borough and the wider North East. While the re-opening of the Café at Jarrow Hall and the newly refurbished Green Room at The Customs House provide new quality offers at these important cultural venues.

Investment in the town centre leisure offer through South Shields 365 will further enhance eating out in the area with one of the project's objectives being to attract a number of high profile national chains who do not currently have a presence in the town.

Restaurant Week in early October has in only three years been established into a successful promotional tool to help with footfall in the early autumn season. We will look to increase the number of participating outlets and the audience reach of this important new initiative.

Over the last couple of years the Proper Food and Drink Festival has taken place over the Spring Bank Holiday in Bents Park. It has become a hugely popular date in the event calendar, attracting around 30,000 visitors and some of the best artisan food and drink suppliers from across the region. This success has resulted in the event organisers looking to bring other high profile food events to the Borough.

Conference and Events Offer

There is currently a shortage of high quality meeting spaces across South Tyneside. This limits the number of regional events and presentations which can be brought to the Borough.

The development of the rooftop space at The Word into The Round, a dedicated space for conferences and events will provide an opportunity for the Borough to host a number of different regional events.

The refurbished conference room at Jarrow Hall also provides a new space for events alongside the established offer at venues such as The Customs House and existing hotels.

Further enhancements to the offer will to some extent depend upon the outcome of work to attract hotel investment to South Tyneside.

South Shields FC leading the Summer Parade 2017



The world famous Great North Run



South Shields Surf School

Sporting Offer

South Tyneside’s highest profile sporting event is the Great North Run. As home to the finish line of the world’s favourite half marathon, the Borough welcomes over 50,000 runners and their friends and family each year.

We do not currently make the most of the opportunities this huge event provides. We must encourage more of our businesses to open on Great North Run day and to engage in special promotions aimed at the runners and their families.

Many visitors will not have been to The Word so we will encourage them to visit the venue and also South Shields Market, which hosted a special food and craft market on Great North Run Day in 2017. We will look to build on this by encouraging as many runners and their families to visit the market as possible.

The Borough’s landscape provides a stunning backdrop to a multitude of sporting activities, from cycling to sailing, golf to horse riding. The area has attracted some enterprises to develop this sector, for example a surf school has recently opened, however further opportunities exist.

The strong performance by South Shields FC is also raising the profile of the Borough. Continued investment by the new owner Geoff Thompson should keep the profile of the club high on the regional and national football agenda. There is an opportunity to work with the club to encourage new fans to visit South Shields to see the club play and to experience what the Borough can offer the visitor.

South Shields FC, alongside Jarrow and Hebburn clubs, will provide a fascinating topic for a future local studies exhibition at either The Word or South Shields Museum and Art Gallery.

Partnership Working

Venues and all of those involved in promoting tourism and cultural venues in South Tyneside currently work well together to promote the Borough, but there is an opportunity to strengthen this even further.

We are currently establishing a strong partnership network, which has The Word at the centre acting as a catalyst. Through this new network we will ensure that activities are co-ordinated for the benefit of all members. This will include creating complementary programming opportunities where appropriate, joining up marketing and ticketing activity and developing a joint approach to volunteering between attractions.

Moving forward it will be important for all partners to work closely with the new Town Centre Coastal Team. This group is made up of representatives from Town Centre and seafront businesses who wish to take a proactive part in promoting South Shields as a destination.



Craft Markets at South Shields

Challenges

A number of challenges have been identified which we will need to be mindful of when implementing the actions to take advantage of the many opportunities identified in this plan. These include:

- Uncertainty over the UK economy following the Brexit Vote
- Increased competition from other areas of the North East who are investing in their tourism product
- Further public sector spending cuts which could limit the options for South Tyneside Council to lead on implementation and delivery in some areas
- Lack of capacity within third sector organisations within the Borough

Priorities 2017 - 2022

We have identified 6 priorities which will help to drive the delivery of the vision for South Tyneside to become the number one visitor destination on the North East coast. They have been developed following a review of market intelligence and consultation with key stakeholders.

Attract New Visitors to the Borough

We will increase the base size of visitors to the Borough by attracting more first time visitors. Our high levels of customer satisfaction mean that levels of repeat visit are high. Increasing our overall visitor numbers will provide more economic activity within the visitor sector which will benefit all businesses and attractions.

Retain Existing Visitors and Increase Dwell Time

The cost of acquiring new visitors can be significant so we must ensure our new and regular visitors enjoy coming to South Tyneside and keep returning. This will increase the return on investment for the Borough. Returning visitors are also more likely to visit a wide range of businesses and attractions which will spread the benefits of tourism across the Borough.

Address Seasonality

We have under exploited capacity across our tourism offer during the quieter winter months and outside of the school holiday periods. There is a growing trend amongst particularly retired visitors to take days out at quieter times of the year. Targeting potential visitors with a potential year round offer will help make our tourism businesses and attractions more sustainable.

Ensure Strong and Effective Partnership Working

To maximise the benefits for everyone involved within the visitor market we must all work together to achieve a common set of goals. Whilst individually we will all be doing great things the sum of those parts will be greater and in times of austerity this is never more important.

Differentiate South Tyneside from other coastal visitor destinations

The visitor market is fiercely competitive and many of our near neighbours are investing to improve their visitor offer. We operate in a global market place where the potential visitor is bombarded with ideas for things to do. The visitor offer in South Tyneside is superb and improving all of the time but to stand out from the crowd we must always present our strongest proposition.



Sister Sledge were one of the well known acts who performed at the South Tyneside Festival 2017

Develop and Strengthen the Product Offer

Through social media there is nowhere to hide if the visitor has a bad experience. We must all strive to ensure that visitors to South Tyneside are delighted during their visit and tell their networks. There is no doubt they will tell everyone if it is a bad experience. Research has also shown that visitors who are enjoying themselves spend more and are likely to return for repeat visits.

Action Plan 2017 - 2022

Priority	Actions	Responsibility
Attract New Visitors to the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain new visitor levels to The Word through quality programming Use the strong family offer at The Word to attract new visitors Sustain a high quality event programme Develop the South Tyneside Festival Parade into a regional event Continue to strengthen product/attraction offer through investment Work with partners to attract new visitors such as increased numbers of Cultural Enthusiasts Strengthen on-line information to inspire new visitors and improve ease of itinerary planning Launch a Destination Advocates programme and encourage positive blogs and posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Tyneside Council Tourism Businesses Partner organisations
Retain Existing Visitors and Increase Dwell-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop themed itineraries which encourage visitors to spend a day in the Borough Use social media to communicate these ideas to existing followers Create a regular stream of communication around new ideas/things to do Strengthen on-line tools to make it easier for visitors to find reasons to re-visit Encourage cross promotion between venues Link this activity to the Destination Advocates programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Tyneside Council Tourism Businesses Partner Organisations
Address Seasonality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted campaign activity aimed at encouraging visits during school term time with particular emphasis on the winter months Ensure attractions have a good quality event and exhibition offer during the quieter months The Word will have a good quality offer across the year and will act as a catalyst to encourage visits to the Borough Build on the success of Restaurant Week Target those most likely to visit during the quieter period i.e. older Cultural Enthusiasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Tyneside Council Partner organisations



Christmas Wonderland events, helping to attract visitors all year round



The Word has proved to be hugely popular since it opened and has won numerous awards



The Summer Parade continues to grow each year



Enhancing attractions such as Arbeia Roman Fort will attract more visitors

Priority	Actions	Responsibility
Ensure Strong and Effective Partnership Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on existing partnerships to strengthen delivery Develop programmes to cross promote Ensure all organisations involved in tourism and cultural delivery play an active role Ensure programming is complementary and does not compete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Tyneside Council Partner organisations
Differentiate South Tyneside from Other Coastal Destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure strong and effective branding across all campaign activity Present compelling reasons to visit Use strongest assets Focus on what is different and new Maximise benefits from National Centre for the Written Word Embed South Tyneside Festival as a must attend event Ensure the quality of exhibitions and events are recognised far and wide Strengthen the offer in South Shields Market Place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Tyneside Council
Develop and Strengthen the Product Offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in Arbeia to maximise this unique asset through the creation of further reconstructions and new visitor facilities Establish WRITE Festival as a significant literary event Restore North Marine Park to its Victorian splendour Hold a major event to commemorate the end of WW1 Redevelop the Anglo-Saxon offer at Jarrow Hall Target high profile spotlight loans for the gallery space at South Shields Museum and Art Gallery Encourage high quality independent event organisers to programme in South Tyneside including niche events Invest in the meetings and events offer at The Customs House Increase the quantity and quality of overnight accommodation through the regeneration agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Tyneside Council Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums Groundwork South Tyneside & Newcastle The Customs House



Colmans Seafood Temple



A year round event programme



The area has a strong cultural development programme

Appendix A

Partners and consultees involved in the development of the 2017 - 2022 Destination Management Plan for South Tyneside:

- South Tyneside Council Cabinet
- South Tyneside Council Place Select Scrutiny Committee

Businesses represented at a consultation event relating to the Destination Management Plan, which included:

- Sandhaven Chalets
- Ocean Beach Pleasure Park
- The Customs House
- National Trust
- South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade
- Groundwork South Tyneside & Newcastle
- South Tyneside Business Forum
- Apollo Bathrooms
- The HR Department
- Ten

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