



Rural Herefordshire Destination Plan

2018 -2022

Executive Summary

www.brightspacefoundation.org.uk

In the 2016 tourism call through Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Rural Development Programme for England Growth Fund a priority was to develop a **Destination Management Plan for Herefordshire** (DMP), with the objectives of:

- Developing a year round visitor offer
- Improving the range and quality of rural tourism products to create new jobs and economic growth.

In response to this call, the **Herefordshire Sustainable Food and Tourism Partnership** (HSFTP), after consultation with Visit Herefordshire, bid to create a unique rural 5 year DMP which draws tourism, farming, and food and drink together. HSFTP, with the Brightspace Foundation acting as project management, were successful.

HSFTP recognises that in Herefordshire, food, tourism, culture and heritage and farming offer significant growth potential for the wider economy. The diverse business and community sectors it represent are the engines of the local economy - woven into the life of the thriving rural communities of the county.

HSFTP formed in 2014, and at its heart is a coalition of key individuals, organisations and networks committed to providing strategic oversight for the development and delivery of sustainable food and tourism strategies. These include the **Duchy of Cornwall, National Farmers Union, Visit Herefordshire, Herefordshire Rural Hub, the Rural and Farming Network, Herefordshire Council, the Brightspace Foundation** and the **Country Landowners Association**. One of the strengths of our partnership is proven opportunity to communicate at all levels; build relationships, networks and collaborative working with fellow professionals to drive competitive advantage for the rural businesses of Herefordshire.

This 'core group' meets every two months during the year and is augmented by a wider reference group and task and finish groups, as needed. Administrative support has been provided by Herefordshire Rural Hub, the Duchy of Cornwall and the Brightspace Foundation.

*Find
experiences
and
memories
for
all seasons*



Seeing the Bigger Picture for Tourism in Herefordshire

The visitor economy is very important to Herefordshire's prosperity. In 2015 over 6 million visitors contributed £442m into the county, supporting 6884 jobs. Tourism helps to provide prosperity for the wider economy and everyone.

The benefits of a thriving and growing industry are not just economic.

Wise growth and sustainable management of the values and assets enjoyed by visitors, from the cornucopia of wild life rich landscape and lifestyles, market towns, historical significance and heritage, green routes, delicious local food, drink and cuisine, diverse culture and creativity to attractions and country pursuits. All help to make Herefordshire a place that visitors, communities and residents can both enjoy and be proud of.

Cllr. David Harlow

Cabinet Member Economy and Corporate Services
Herefordshire Council

Find a place for everyone

Creating the future for a vibrant Destination Herefordshire

This destination management plan will help Herefordshire's organisations, businesses and networks to develop new, innovative and agile ways of working together. To lead, manage and influence all aspects, qualities and values of the destination that contribute to making things happen in managing the reputation of Herefordshire as a MUST BE place of interest where visitors come.

This will require integrating the needs of the visitor, businesses, residents and the environment we all share. To ensure success the quality of experience, product and memories must be truthfully delivered in the promise to visitors.



Herefordshire's *successes* so far



Tourism is an important employment sector in Herefordshire directly employing 6,884 people.

In 2015 Herefordshire welcomed 2.65 million overnight visitors and 4.21 million day visitors who between them contributed £442 million to the local economy. Of which 29.7% was spent on food and drink; 24.9% on indirect spend; 13.8 % on shopping; 7.7% on accommodation; 7% on transport and 4.5% on recreation.

Herefordshire tourism businesses regularly win national and regional awards. Annually Visit Herefordshire holds a Tourism Excellence Award Scheme. Categories include – Camping and Holiday, Conference Venue, Self-catering, Guest accommodation, Hotel, Visitor Attraction, Eating Out, Commercial and Community Festival and Event, Food Producer and Drink Producer.

Herefordshire hosts unique attractions such as the Aymestrey Limestone Formation, the Mappa Mundi (an outstanding treasure of the medieval world), the Herefordshire School of Sculpture and the dynasty of the Mortimer Marcher Lords.

Herefordshire has given the world Hereford cattle, cider and perry.

Herefordshire inspired Elgar, Wordsworth, Mike Oldfield, David Garrick, Thomas Treherne, John Masefield, Dennis Potter and Phil Rickman amongst others.

The Herefordshire brand

- Is the way visitors perceive the county
- Promotes Recognition
- Sets Herefordshire apart from competition
- Tells people about how we act and behave

It helps our visitors know what to expect and represents us and our promise to our customers. Our brand also provides business value. In partner and stakeholder discussions there was agreement that we should keep and grow 'Here you can'.

VISION

CREATIVITY

Experiences

The diversity of our landscapes and countryside spaces, our unique and often rare veteran trees, the wild rivers of the Wye, Lugg, Arrow and Teme, forests and woods, gardens and wildlife give a feeling of an unforgettable space to be oneself. Large areas of Herefordshire are within the Wye Valley AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and the Malvern Hills AONB, Brecon Beacons National Park and Shropshire Hills AONB border Herefordshire.

Memories

Herefordshire is a place to share with loved ones. There is always something fresh and beautiful to see or do which will boost your health and wellbeing the natural way. Choose to sleep under the stars or in comfort and style and get seasonal inspiration or just eat the view. Herefordshire is where silence is too common a luxury. Be out of contact and undisturbed. Anything is possible; Herefordshire is boundless.

REPUTATION

Culture

Contemporary culture and creativity flourishes in galleries, exhibitions, theatres, craft workshops and a myriad of festivals and events. Historically, Herefordshire is a land of political history and intrigue dominated by the rich estates, offices of power and profit. Here you will find castles, churches, market towns and stately homes. Following the border between England and Wales, Offa's Dyke National Trail is Britain's longest ancient monument.

People

Our people are strong independent characters proud to be from Herefordshire. The welcome will be warm and all enjoy sharing their genuine experiences, culture, stories and expertise that make a visit to Herefordshire memorable.

Partner and Stakeholder Advocates Visitor Management Infrastructure

The 4 columns of the brand model: **Experiences**, **Memories**, **Culture** and **People** describes facets of our brand that make Herefordshire distinctive as a visitor destination.



*Herefordshire's **vision***

Here You Can

*To encourage everyone in Herefordshire to find their own way
of expressing that Herefordshire is an unforgettable place.
To create an authentic and memorable experience so that
visitors will return over and over.*

Our Purpose

For tourism to thrive and contribute to the prosperity of Herefordshire.

We will all work together to sustainably build and powerfully promote a high quality, distinctive and genuine tourism offer, valued by our visitors, supported by our business and resident communities, which truly delivers.



What will this look like?

The intrinsic USP's (Unique Selling Points) of Herefordshire are the **Wye** as one of the nation's favourite rivers, a diverse **landscape**, high value **environmental** and **historic features**, **food** and **drink** and the value of the **culture** that has created the county's **communities** and **traditions**. These qualities appeal to a growing number of visitors of all ages and societies.

To achieve longer staying and higher spending visitors, and sustainable growth in tourism, we need to change our mind set. From a message of 'this is what Herefordshire has' to one of 'this is what we do with what we have' to attract visitors, to discover the hidden gems and unforgettable experiences of Herefordshire.

A driver to achieve success must be resourceful, forward thinking, agile and innovative leadership and management, supported by a lean and professional strategic body to take responsibility for delivery.

There will be a need to nurture and support inward investment and the growing number of innovative independent businesses, whilst encouraging mature businesses to become larger employers. This way everyone should benefit in developing a sustainable visitor economy.



Our Goals

PRIORITY ONE

Grow Herefordshire as a visitor destination

Put the structures in place that develop the assets and image of Herefordshire, strengthen the visitor experience and improve its branding position and market share.

PRIORITY TWO

Grow Herefordshire's share of visitor markets

Improve the image of Herefordshire by using the county's strongest assets, explore new communication methods, encourage dialogue and feedback through the rapidly changing world of digital media. Reach new niche growth markets that will allow Herefordshire to differentiate from competitors as a destination and strengthen the visitor experience that Herefordshire is for everyone.

PRIORITY THREE

Developing great rural experiences and memories

Sustain, encourage and grow evergreen and new products and events that truthfully showcase the wide diversity of the natural assets, culture and heritage of Herefordshire.

PRIORITY FOUR

Developing people

Develop competent and motivated employees and businesses.



Delivering the vision will require setting agreed targets or Key Performance Indicators, an action plan to be reviewed annually and the alignment of the county's strategic bodies and policies to support the tourism and food agenda.

Measure	How	Growth Targets
Number of Visitors to Herefordshire	Bi Annual STEAM report	5% by 2022
Value of visitor spend	Bi Annual STEAM report	6% by 2022
Number of people employed in tourism	Business Register and Employment Survey	10% by 2022
Visitor spend influenced by Herefordshire marketing activity	Website analytics and visitor surveys	£8m per year
Business Profitability	Business Survey	55% showing increase
Rating amongst 'most loved' destinations	Visit England Survey	To be in top 25
Visitor Satisfaction with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall visit • Quality of attractions • Quality of accommodation • Variety of things to do • Accessibility • Customer service 	Customer Survey On line booking quality forums	90% would recommend 90% good or very good 90% good or very good 95% good or very good 80% good or very good 90% good or very good
Perception of tourism as a first choice career	Survey of students and part time employees	To be developed

Action

Who are Herefordshire's visitors and how will we communicate with them?



Each year tourism marketing is constantly adjusting and reacting to changes in technology and attitudes. What does this mean for creating a competitive marketing strategy for Herefordshire? There will be a need to look beyond staying with the traditional ways of marketing to the 'old familiar' visitor segmentations.

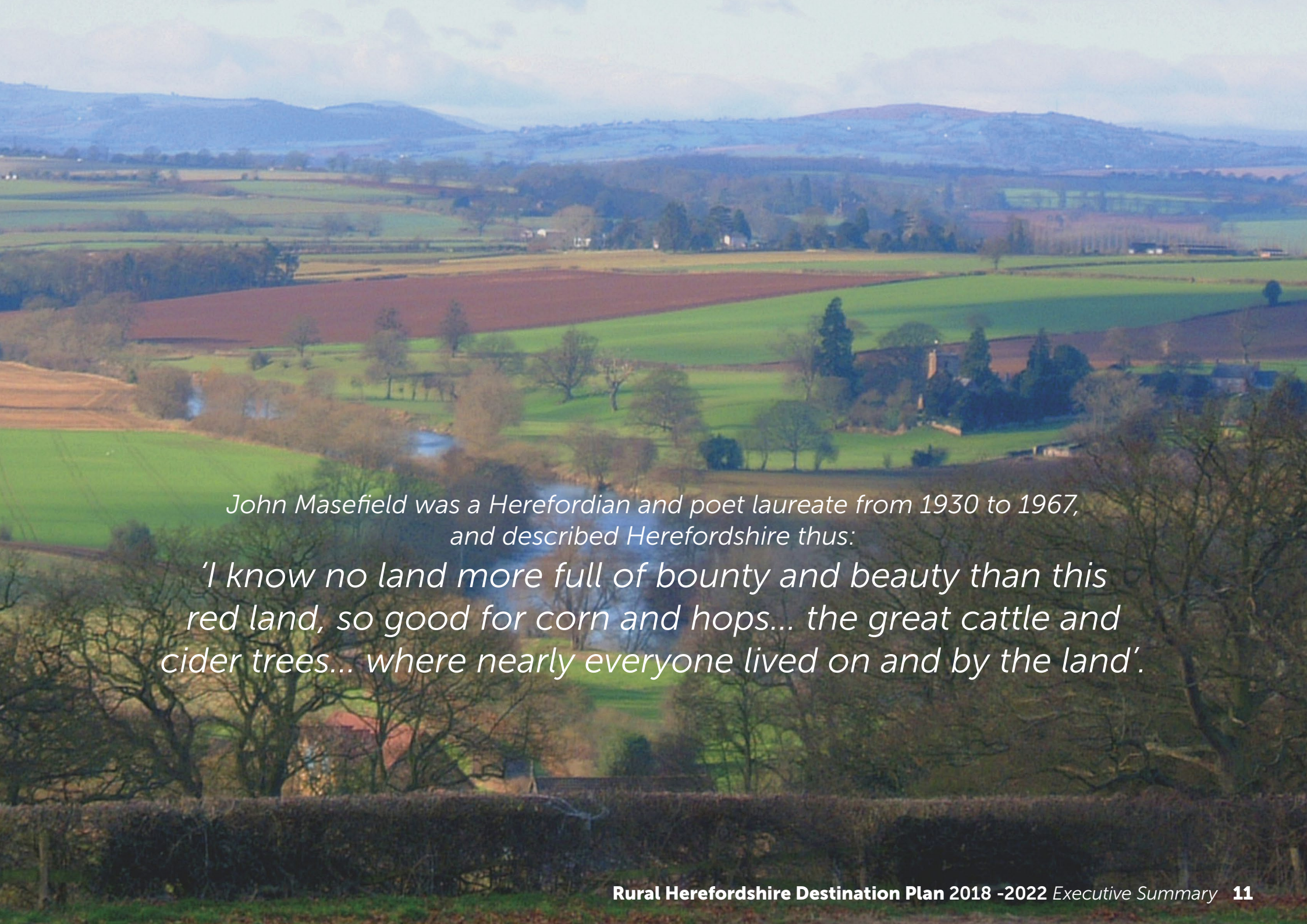
Herefordshire is for everyone.

New ways need to focus on relationship marketing to build stronger loyalty and long- trusting rapport with visitors to drive word-of-mouth promotion long after a visit or stay, and lead to on-going generation of business.

Marketing is always evolving and what works for one year may not work for another, the marketing plan will need to be annually reviewed as it unfolds.

**Loyalty fosters economically,
socially and environmentally
sustainable development.**

World Trade Organisation



*John Masefield was a Herefordian and poet laureate from 1930 to 1967,
and described Herefordshire thus:
'I know no land more full of bounty and beauty than this
red land, so good for corn and hops... the great cattle and
cider trees... where nearly everyone lived on and by the land'.*



HSFTP wish to thank everyone who has so generously given of their time and knowledge during the development of the plan.

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The European Agricultural
Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas

