



2026-2029

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



FOR
SHROPSHIRE

VISITSHROPSHIRE.CO.UK

They say the grass isn't always greener.

Well, with 23% of Shropshire designated a National Landscape of outstanding natural beauty, it's safe to say, it is in Shropshire. And with no city in sight, the night sky is darker, and the roads are quieter too.

In fact, everything's just that bit better in Shropshire. The rivers are longer. The towns are quirkiest. The streets are wonkier. The people are friendlier. And the Sunday roast is tastier too.

But don't just take our word for it, discover it for yourself.

LIFE'S BETTER IN
SHROPSHIRE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document outlines the Shropshire Destination Management Plan (DMP), which serves as a strategic framework for enhancing the visitor economy in Shropshire from 2026 to 2029. The plan emphasizes the region's natural beauty, exceptional history and heritage, and unique local offerings, aiming to increase the value of tourism

Overview of Shropshire's Appeal

Shropshire boasts 23% of its area designated as a National Landscape, providing a tranquil escape from urban life. The region is characterised by its picturesque rivers, quirky towns, and friendly locals, which contribute to a unique visitor experience. The plan encourages potential visitors to explore Shropshire and discover its charm firsthand.

Objectives of the DMP

The DMP aims to:

- Increase the value of tourism.
- Attract more visitors and persuade existing visitors to stay longer.
- Enhance collaboration among stakeholders.
- Elevate Shropshire's profile as a tourist destination.
- Strengthen a regenerative approach to tourism development.
- Enhance Shropshire's product and reputation as an accessible and inclusive destination.

These objectives are designed to provide direction for stakeholders, enhance the credibility of the tourism sector, and inform future funding and investment strategies.



Methodology

The plan was developed through a consultative process involving Shropshire Council and various stakeholders. It included updating previous plans, engaging in focus groups, and conducting interviews to gather insights on tourism themes, priorities, and emerging trends. It also aligns with Visit England's strategies and priorities and is designed to work in parallel with Telford and Wrekin's DMP as part of the Telford and Shropshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership.

Current Visitor Economy

Shropshire's visitor economy is rich in history and natural beauty, with significant figures indicating 10.23 million visitors in 2024, contributing approximately £910 million to the local economy. The employment within the sector has also seen growth, with around 9,153 people employed in tourism-related jobs.

Visitor Demographics

The visitor demographics indicate that 86% of visitors are day-trippers, while staying visitors account for 14%. However, staying visitors generate a considerable proportion of the economic impact of the visitor economy. In line with our objective to grow the value of the visitor economy we need to encourage longer stays.

Strengths and Gaps

The DMP identifies key product strengths including:

- A variety of heritage attractions and a strong food and drink culture.
- Unique market towns with distinct identities.
- A strong and varied outdoor activity offer, particularly walking opportunities.

However, it also highlights gaps, such as the need for more serviced accommodation and family-friendly attractions and the need for more transport choices and connectivity.

Three-Year Growth Plan (2026–2029)

The growth plan focuses on:

- adjusting the ratio of day to staying visitors
 - specific targets include shifting the visitor ratio from 86:14 to 80:20 by 2029
- developing effective partnerships including:
 - enhancing collaboration with Telford and Wrekin
 - delivering activity as part of the LVEP
 - working with neighbouring destinations including the Marches
 - connecting with Birmingham and the West Midlands
- improving Shropshire's image and growing awareness
- establishing a national reputation for regenerative tourism
- Developing the product and reputation as an accessible and inclusive destination



Priorities for Development

The plan outlines several priorities:

1. Increase bed stock to encourage longer stays.
2. Build on past work to create a clear identity for Shropshire as a tourist destination.
3. Implement integrated marketing strategies to attract visitors.
4. Support regenerative tourism initiatives that benefit the environment and local communities.
5. Work with the sector to develop product to ensure that the destination is accessible and inclusive.
6. The development of county wide and regional partnerships.
7. The creation of a robust evaluation framework based on economic impact survey e.g. STEAM, a visitor survey and partner intelligence.

Conclusion

The Shropshire DMP is a comprehensive strategy aimed at revitalising the visitor economy by leveraging the region's unique assets and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. By focusing on regenerative tourism practices and enhancing the overall visitor experience, Shropshire aims to position itself as an attractive and increasingly popular destination in England's tourism landscape.

WELCOME...

Welcome by Cllr Rob Wilson,

Shropshire Council Portfolio Holder for Transport and Economic Growth

Shropshire is a wonderful county, and one I am proud to call 'home'. Sharing our home with visitors is a fantastic privilege. It is the birthplace of the Theory of Evolution and the Industrial Revolution, with vibrant market towns and a precious National Landscape. Shropshire is one of Britain's best kept secrets, and we want to share it with the world.

I am delighted to present the Shropshire Destination Management Plan, which reflects the Council's strong commitment to working together to support and nurture our vital visitor economy. We recognise that tourism is not only a powerful driver of economic growth—impacting positively on a wide range of businesses from hospitality to retail and beyond—but also plays a central role in creating a vibrant, attractive, and inclusive county for our residents.

The visitor economy is key in Shropshire for the many opportunities it brings: from sustaining local jobs and supporting independent enterprises to encouraging investment and innovation right across the county.

Importantly, the improvements we make for visitors—enhanced amenities, accessible attractions, green spaces, and cultural experiences—also contribute to making Shropshire an even better place to live, work and enjoy. This plan sets out our shared ambitions for the future, and I look forward to working with partners, businesses, and communities to realise our vision for a thriving and sustainable destination that benefits everyone.





ABOUT THIS PLAN

The Shropshire Destination Plan is intended as a county sector strategy, not a detailed checklist for any single organisation such as Shropshire Council or Visit Shropshire. It's about setting a direction for a range of organisations, interest groups, and local destination management teams, enabling them to create their own plans that best suit their area of interest. Projects could be identified that align with the plan's objectives and priorities, funding secured, and partners collaborate to deliver these projects for the benefit of Shropshire's visitors and communities.

The plan sets out a three-year growth plan to:

- Increase the value of tourism.
- Improve collaboration across Shropshire and beyond.
- Increase the destination's profile and appeal among current and potential visitors.
- Strengthen the regenerative approach to visitor economy development.
- Ensure that Shropshire enhances its product and reputation as an accessible and inclusive destination.

Its purpose is to:

- Provide direction and impetus for everyone with a stake in the sector.
- Help the sector to gain credibility and recognition as an important driver of the county's economy.
- Articulate the priorities of businesses and stakeholders in Shropshire's visitor economy so that they can be fed into local and regional plans.
- Provide an important reference document for future funding and funding bids.
- For use by developers and tourism businesses to shape their investment, and
- Inform, guide, and influence how resources are used and allocated.





Methodology

The plan was developed in consultation with Shropshire Council between December 2024 and April 2025 in three stages.

- The first stage was to update the 2022 DMP with new data and developments.
- The second stage involved engaging stakeholders to assess progress since 2022 and gather future strategy insights. 3 focus groups were convened: one on tourism themes like accessibility and sustainability, another on priority areas for the destination, and a third analysing emerging themes and brainstorming new development ideas.
- Alongside these focus groups we conducted twelve 1-2-1 interviews with stakeholders who have specific roles or insights e.g. English Heritage, landscape management, festivals, training, business improvement districts. Subsequently, a full-day workshop was conducted with a larger group of stakeholders to pinpoint those hero products and target audiences that would drive growth.
- The final stage involved integrating findings from the second phase into a business survey to 50 key businesses across the county to broaden our perspective and confirm emerging hypotheses and strategic imperatives.

The DMP is a live document that will be periodically reviewed and adjusted to take account of the operating environment (political and financial), the needs and expectations of consumers, businesses and communities, as well as opportunities to develop new products and propositions.

The list of priorities and actions is intentionally short so that success can be easily tracked and attributed.

Governance

Shropshire Council with its partners Telford and Wrekin Council and Visit Shropshire have secured Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status and are part of the national structure of tourism management which is overseen by Visit England.

Over the timeframe of this DMP the Telford and Shropshire LVEP will develop a new governance and organisational model and work on a growth plan.

A key requirement of an LVEP is that it has a destination management plan (DMP) that is supported by stakeholders and delivered in partnership. Telford and Wrekin’s DMP was published prior to LVEP accreditation and runs to 2029. Shropshire’s new plan covers the same time period and, as much as possible, mirrors the Telford and Wrekin plan to make it easy to see where the two align. Towards the end of the decade it is expected that the Telford and Shropshire LVEP will develop a single DMP.



SHROPSHIRE'S VISITOR ECONOMY NOW

SECTION 1

Shropshire is rich in landscape and history, home to world changing ideas and an abundance of geological wonders. It was here in the early 18th century that Abraham Darby lit his furnace at Coalbrookdale and ignited the Industrial Revolution. A hundred years later Charles Darwin was born in Shrewsbury, observed the landscapes, flora and fauna around him and went on to change forever the way we think about ourselves.

From using the Earth's resources to power the world's industry to deepening global understanding of how its ecosystems work, a fascination with the natural world is part of Shropshire's

DNA. The county ranks as the sixth least densely populated county in England, providing visitors with the space and freedom to relax and recharge.

The Shropshire Hills National Landscape (formerly known as AONB) competes with England's national parks in the beauty stakes, while the River Severn that gives the lively county town of Shrewsbury such an impressive situation, is one of the defining features of the county.

Ellesmere, in North Shropshire is surrounded by 9 glacial lakes known as Mere's and described as Shropshire's mini 'Lake District'





@lanbartlettphotography



The county has a quirky and independent streak which gives rise to many unique pockets of delight such as Bishops Castle where the Poetry Pharmacy prescribes for the soul, in Oswestry where in August a host of balloons delights, the food provenance culture in Ludlow where food miles are counted in single figures, Bridgnorth which has one of the most beautiful streets in England, the bijou town of Clun with its nearby pine marten colony, Much Wenlock where the concept of the Olympic Games was hatched and the small town of Market Drayton where delicious gingerbread biscuits can be found.

Wem, where the annual Sweet Pea Festival celebrates the town's floral heritage with vibrant displays. Broseley boasts close connection with the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, is home to John Wilkinson creator of the 1st Iron boat and the world-famous clay tobacco pipe industry. Soulton Hall has a fascinating history that includes ancient architectural codes, Shakespearean connections and internationally significant religious artifacts. The nine meres, formed during the ice age and often described as a 'mini Lake District', can be found in and around Ellesmere.

Shaped by its history, landscape and people, Shropshire is one of England's lesser-known destinations. This plan sets out a path for it to become one of the country's most desirable.



DESTINATION PERFORMANCE

Destination performance is primarily assessed through STEAM* reports. The 2019 report provides a baseline of the pre-Covid situation, while the subsequent three reports since the pandemic's conclusion enable an evaluation of the recovery of Shropshire's visitor economy.

Visitors

In 2024, Shropshire visitor numbers were estimated to be 10.23 million. This compares to 11.1 million in 2019 before the pandemic and is slightly down from 2023 at 10.5 million.

The number of visitor days was 13.28 million, which is also still down compared to 2019's 13.92 million and 2023's 13.45 million. However, compared to 2019, the average stay is now slightly longer at 1.29 days compared to 1.25 days.

Day visitors account for 86% of all visitors and approximately 50% of the total economic impact, staying visitor are only 14% of all visitors but also represent about half of the economic impact. However in 2024 the number of staying visitors was slightly down (-1.3%)





Economic impact

In 2024, tourism contributed £910 million to Shropshire's visitor economy, which is an increase of 29% compared to pre-pandemic levels and £37 million more than in 2023.



Employment

The number of people employed in the sector has grown consistently each year since 2022 and is currently estimated at 9153, which is an increase of 3.5% compared to 2019.



Accommodation

Non-serviced accommodation saw a 6% increase in visitors, contributing to a 9.7% rise in economic impact. Serviced accommodation's economic impact grew by 3.4%, despite a 5.4% drop in hotel and guest house visitors, possibly due to a shortage or better value options elsewhere.



The shape of the visitor economy

Food and drink generate £203m for Shropshire's visitor economy, followed by shopping, driven by Shrewsbury's appeal. Accommodation spending is £107m, a 30% increase from 2019 but only 5% from 2023 to 2024, likely due to limited bed stock. The lack of a major attraction may be limiting recreation spend, which is £93.5m, up 4% year-on-year.

Overall, despite some positive aspects, destination performance in 2024 has been consistent rather than exceptional. It is crucial that the recommended actions in this plan are followed to enable Shropshire to achieve its full potential.



THE VISITOR OFFER

A place of innovation and unconventional thinking throughout its history, Shropshire balances respect for its history and heritage with taking innovative approaches to celebrate its outstanding assets and delighting visitors with new experiences and ways to explore the county.

There are three key ingredients that makes Shropshire an enticing place to visit:

- Shrewsbury, the county town with intriguingly named locations, atmospheric streets and a vibrant hospitality and retail offer.
- Many historic market towns, all different in look and feel but characteristic of the place with a strong community spirit.
- Stunning landscapes epitomised by the Shropshire Hills National Landscape that are relatively uncrowded and ideal for outdoor recreation, especially walking and rural relaxation.
- Abundant water-based activities from wild swimming to paddleboarding and sailing to taking a narrowboat on the extensive canal network.

Location is also a positive for the county. The major urban population centres of Manchester, Liverpool City region and Birmingham combined put over 7 million people within an hour and a half drive time of the county. A further 1m potential visitors live in Cheshire to the north.

A closer look at the offer reveals additional product strengths and some notable gaps that if addressed could increase the value of the visitor economy significantly over the next three years.



Accommodation base

Accommodation supply is heavily weighted towards non-serviced with the largest number in the Motorhome, Caravan & Camping sector. In the serviced sector there are over double the number of establishments with over 50 rooms or less than 10 than mid-size properties.

DISTRIBUTION BY TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION 2023	Est.	Beds
All Paid Accommodation Total	814	22,627
Serviced Accommodation	22%	25%
Non-Serviced Accommodation	78%	75%

The distribution of accommodation is similar to many rural English Counties with a concentration of hotels, B&Bs and guesthouse accommodation in the towns, particularly Shrewsbury, and non-serviced accommodation in rural locations. Budget provision is focused on Shrewsbury and the main visitor hot spots with Travelodge and Premier Inn having the largest footprint.

The county is underrepresented in the portfolios of the major branded hotels with just a handful present such as The Macdonald Hotel in Whitchurch and the Radisson in Albrighton. In visitor hotspots occupancy and rack rates and midweek business travel suggest that demand is outstripping supply. More small-scale independent properties in the 20-50 rooms categories would seem appropriate though this needs to be confirmed. There are few examples of alternative accommodation options such as yurts, tepees, and shepherd's huts, a surprise given Shropshire's rural nature.

Attractions

Heritage is a product strength in Shropshire with two World Heritage Sites in or partly in the county and five National Trust properties including Attingham Park in Atcham, which is consistently in the top echelon of NT paid attractions and Dudmaston Hall, near Bridgnorth. English Heritage manage 15 properties including castles, priories and abbeys of particular note is the under-valued Wroxeter Roman City and the recently acquired Flaxmill in Shrewsbury. There are three heritage railways, the Severn Valley Railway, Bridgnorth's funicular cliff railway and Cambrian Heritage Railway in Oswestry.

Shropshire features 32 castles and forts, from the grand Ludlow Castle to the picturesque Stokesay and Whittington Castles. There is also the ancient Iron Age Hill Fort of Oswestry, highlighting its rich history.

The county's heritage is further reflected in its noteworthy churches and religious sites, such as Shrewsbury Abbey, St Laurence's in Ludlow, Much Wenlock Priory, St Mary's in Bridgnorth, and St Oswald's in Oswestry—all celebrated for their architecture and historical significance.

Wollerton Old Hall Gardens is award-winning but for a rural county Shropshire has relatively few significant garden attractions and most are attached to historic houses. Family attractions are under-represented with a cluster around Telford plus a couple of falconry centres and farm attractions, including Park Hall Farm in Oswestry. Ironbridge, Attingham Park, the heritage railways, the British Ironworks Centre, Shrewsbury Prison, the RAF Museum Midlands and recently reopened Acton Scott Heritage Farm all have clear family appeal. Despite these new additions there remains a question mark over whether there is a critical mass of attractions that makes Shropshire great for families.

Activities

Family activities include a sizeable number of water sports hire companies for canoeing and paddleboarding, Sabrina boat trips on the Severn and a couple of balloon flight companies. Park Hall Farm and Attingham Park also offer strong family appeal.

Many of the county's attractions provide a range of seasonal activities within their properties and a new offer at Shrewsbury Prison is proving popular and attracting good numbers.

The county's landscapes are places for outdoor leisure including walking, cycling and horse riding. There is little packaged or branded outdoors product compared to other rural counties and an emphasis on visitors enjoying landscapes and views. Cycling as a way of exploring the Shropshire Hills is encouraged as it is environmentally positive. The electric bike has 'transformed' cycle touring - opening access to the hills and ways to explore the countryside and has the potential to further promote.

The canal network in Shropshire holds significant economic, social, and historical value for the county. Boaters traveling through the region and staying in local marinas contribute to the local economy. Additionally, the towpaths along the canals are popular with walkers and cyclists, while the waterways themselves offer opportunities for paddle boarding and canoeing. Moreover, the canals are an integral part of Shropshire's identity, reflecting its rich heritage and contributing to the area's unique charm.

As well as a network of canals, water-based activities can be found across the county including wild swimming in rivers in Shrewsbury and Ludlow, paddleboarding at Ellesmere and Alderford and sailing on Colemere and Whitemere.

Opportunities to see wildlife are on offer across the county including Heron Watch at Ellesmere.

Equestrian tourism presents a potential opportunity for Shropshire, highlighted by the 100-mile Jack Mytton signature bridle way. More research and development are needed to assess its value and identify necessary improvements.



Activities provided by cultural venues such as museums, theatres and cinemas appeal largely to a local audience and are more likely to animate a visit that generate one.



Hospitality and retail

Farming heritage and fertile countryside provides Shropshire with its raw ingredients for culinary excellence.

The food and drink offer is more independent in nature in Shropshire than in some comparable areas of the country. Across the county visitors can enjoy Enticing cafes such as CSons in Ludlow and Shrewsbury, pubs like The Bailey Head in Oswestry, crowned the CAMRA National Pub of the Year for 2025 and restaurants like Wild Shropshire Restaurant, Whitchurch using locally sourced food. The county boasts an impressive number of breweries including Hobson's in Cleobury Mortimer who have won The Best Green Business Award from SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers) twice.

Ludlow is the best-known food destination and there has been significant expansion in Shrewsbury with entrepreneurs bringing new and often high-quality concepts to the town.

Retail includes a strong representation of high street names, especially in Shrewsbury and near by Telford and the market towns are home to a wealth of independent retailers, with Shrewsbury's Wyle Cop consistently being mentioned as one of England's best streets for independent operators. Shrewsbury is gaining a reputation for quality shopping among a regional audience and has secured national awards and recognition for its indoor Market which has won Britain's Favourite Market 4 times – 3 wins in the past 3 years!

Culture

The nationally significant Ironbridge Gorge Museums in Telford, Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, collections and exhibitions in historic properties, commercial galleries and mixed use arts venues make up a significant part of the cultural offer. Several market towns have a heritage centre or local museum. Whilst there are a limited number of theatres, such as Theatre Severn in Shrewsbury, performance spaces can be found in most of the market towns including The Assembly Rooms at Ludlow and Theatre on the Steps in Bridgnorth.

Shrewsbury has a strong festival heritage, with major events taking place in the Quarry and around the town. Its most popular event has been the Shrewsbury Flower Show, which was cancelled in 2025 whilst the event managers reevaluate it. The major event and festival sector is facing increasing challenges with the Shrewsbury Flower Show under strain, and the county struggles to maintain and grow previously successful events.

There are many smaller local events, workshops and cultural activities arranged around the main school and annual holiday periods such as Oswestry Balloon Carnival, Shrewsbury Food Festival, Market Drayton's Ginger and Spice Festival, Whitchurch's The Blackberry Fair and the Clun Green Man Festival.

Evidence from other events in Shrewsbury and Ludlow show that live music is working particularly well attracting new and younger audiences. Ludlow Food Festival continues to enjoy a national reputation and showcase the best of producers from along the Marches, and the town is developing its festival programme centred on Ludlow Castle.



Summary of product strengths, gaps and new development

Product strengths	Product gaps	Product in development
<p>Heritage attractions</p> <p>Caravan and camping accommodation</p> <p>Market towns</p> <p>Independent retail</p> <p>Shrewsbury</p> <p>Food and drink</p> <p>National and protected landscapes, outdoor activity offer and wildlife watching</p> <p>Extensive network of walking routes including the Shropshire Way</p> <p>Outdoor challenge events</p> <p>Canal Network</p>	<p>Serviced accommodation & motorhome provision</p> <p>Festivals and events with a national reputation</p> <p>Branded / packaged outdoor activities e.g. Go Ape</p> <p>Business tourism offer</p> <p>Church Tourism</p> <p>Equestrian Tourism</p> <p>Further need for the provision of Visitor information in destination</p>	<p>Family attractions</p> <p>Electric bike experiences</p> <p>Nature watching linked biodiversity improvements</p> <p>Accommodation in Shrewsbury</p> <p>Outdoor hub at Attingham Park</p> <p>Ellesmere Canal Basin</p>



DESTINATION SNAPSHOT



Shrewsbury



Oswestry



Shropshire Hills
National Landscape



Church Stretton

Shrewsbury

Shrewsbury, considered one of the best places to live, has a compact centre encircled by the River Severn. It boasts historic buildings, charming passageways, beautiful churches, and engaging museums. The town features cozy coffee shops, quaint old pubs, and fine dining spots. The Market Hall's market is nationally acclaimed.

Oswestry

Oswestry, a border town known for its annual Balloon Carnival and is also home to the Cambrian Heritage Railway. It is famous for war poet Wilfred Owen; his legacy is marked by a town trail and a statue in Cae Glas Park. Old Oswestry Hill Fort, an Iron Age stronghold, offers panoramic views of south Shropshire, Wales, and the Cheshire plains. Nearby can be found Park Hall Farm and Countryside Experience, the British Ironworks Centre and the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site.

Shropshire Hills National Landscape

Recognised internationally for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas by the Europarc Federation, this area rivals England's national parks for beauty and features a diverse geology. Its varied landscapes include the rocky Stiperstones, the plateau and deep valleys of the Long Mynd, the craggy Stretton Hills, the quarried Clee Hill, the wooded Wenlock Edge, and the rolling hills of the Clun Forest.

Church Stretton

Church Stretton, known as 'Little Switzerland', for its scenic beauty, is an ideal base for outdoor activities like walking, cycling, mountain biking, orienteering, and gliding in the Shropshire Hills. The Long Mynd offers spectacular views from Snowdonia in the north to the Malvern Hills in the south.

Clun

In A Shropshire Lad, AE Housman describes “Clunton and Clunbury, Clungunford and Clun” as “the quietest places under the sun.” Approximately 125 years later, this small border town remains quiet except during spring when the 15th century stone packhorse bridge that divides the town hosts an annual event featuring the Green Man and a witch. The town’s high street has historic significance and is overlooked by the remains of Clun Castle.

Clun Museum holds historic artefacts from the town and surrounding area.

Ludlow

Ludlow, in south Shropshire, is known for its gourmet food. Recently, the focus has shifted from restaurants to high-quality produce and food miles. Visiting the Ludlow Food Centre or walking around the market can demonstrate this change. The town contains over 500 historic buildings, including Ludlow Castle, which dates to the Norman conquest and is considered one of England’s notable structures.

Ludlow

Much Wenlock

Much Wenlock is a renowned small market town. Dr. William Penny Brookes started the Wenlock Olympian games in 1850, which inspired Baron de Coubertin to create the modern Olympic Games. The town features fine medieval buildings, commercial art galleries, and the ruins of Wenlock Priory.

Bridgnorth

John Betjeman wrote, “If you approach the High Town by the cliff railway you feel you are being lifted up to heaven”. The Bridgnorth funicular railway links Low Town with High Town, which is lively and full of independent shops, a church by Thomas Telford, and East Castle Street, known for its architecture. The River Severn in Low Town offers a peaceful spot for anglers, walkers, and wildlife. It is also home to the Severn Valley Railway.

Bridgnorth



Clun



Much Wenlock





Ellesmere and the Meres

Ellesmere and the Meres

Ellesmere, Shropshire's own mini-Lake District, boasts scenic meres created by glaciers 12,000 years ago, rich wildlife and impressive landscapes. Visitors can enjoy tranquil walks, cycling, and angling along its canals and meres. The 11th-century medieval castle atop the crown bowling green offers breathtaking views, while Ellesmere Yard, established in 1806 by Thomas Telford, is a testament to heritage canal maintenance and craftsmanship. Historic buildings and the area's natural beauty make it an ideal destination for relaxed tourism.

Market Drayton

In 1245, King Henry III granted the town a charter for a weekly market, which continues to be held every Wednesday. The town is known for its gingerbread, which inspired the Ginger and Spice Festival. In the centre, there is Buttercross Market Hall dating from 1824 and Joules brewery.



Market Drayton

Whitchurch

Dating from the Neolithic period and located between Chester and Wroxeter during Roman times, Whitchurch boasts a charming town centre filled with independent shops and serves as an excellent base for walkers and canal boating, being situated on Telford's Llangollen Canal. The town has a long-standing history of dairy farming and cheese making, and in recent years, it has attracted several highly acclaimed chefs.

Bishops Castle

Bishops Castle is in an area known for its excellent walking trails and dark skies. The town features attractions such as the Poetry Pharmacy at the top of the hill and the Three Tuns brewery. Visitors can observe unique elements like elephants painted on buildings, hats tied to railings, and houses decorated with flower garlands.



Whitchurch

Bishops Castle



Our Landscape



80 kms of canal

A significant stretch of The River Sever, the UK's longest river

5600km public footpaths

30 horse riding trails

14 internationally important wetland sites

A Europarc Federation charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, Shropshire Hills

2 national nature reserves

6 Forestry England sites open to the public with cycle and walking tracks

A National Trail and a long-distance walking route, Offa's Dyke Path and The Shropshire Way

Landscape features with a national reputation – Wenlock Edge, The Long Mynd, The Wrekin, Carding Mill Valley, Stiperstones, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses, Meres.

2 UNESCO World Heritage sites
 Ironbridge Gorge and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, heritage icons



What makes Shropshire special...

Every destination has natural beauty, heritage, and award-winning accommodation and dining. What makes Shropshire unique?



The Modern Olympic Games
 Based on The Wenlock Olympian Games, still held every year.

Skyscraper pioneer
 Ditherington Flaxmill was the world's first multi-storey iron framed building.

Slow food capital of England
 built on the national reputation of Ludlow for culinary excellence and local provenance.

The world's most influential scientist
 birthplace and inspiration to Charles Darwin.

Shrewsbury, best high street in the UK
 Wyle Cop topped The Telegraph's 2024 list (and Shrewsbury Market frequently rated Best in England!).

Shropshire is 'one to watch'.
 According to the Association of British Travel Agents.

County of castles
 Out of 32 Ludlow and Stokesay standout for their history and setting.

Ancient borderland
 Offa's Dyke, a national trail crossing between England and the Welsh border.

Birthplace of the Industrial Revolution
 powering the world.

Award winning family fun.
 RAF Museum Midlands, Severn Valley Railway, Attingham Park and Weston Park.

Mini Lake District made up of 46 hectare Ellesmere & surrounding 8 ice age meres.

Star of the natural world
 Shropshire showcases rocks from 11 of the 13 recognised geological periods.

Outstanding landscapes
 from Stiperstones, the Long Mynd, Carding Mill Valley to The Wrekin voted one of the best viewpoints in England.

Home to remarkable Market towns



SHROPSHIRE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT
PLAN / 2026 – 2029

Stakeholder perspective

Stakeholders and visitor economy businesses are positive and enthusiastic about the county's tourism future but realistic about what is needed to reach its potential. It is agreed that Shropshire needs to focus on distinctive and unique visitor experiences, to avoid becoming an undifferentiated rural destination. Concepts such as sustainability and accessibility will be increasingly embedded in the DNA of everything we do.

There is also wide agreement to focus a **few achievable goals** which will be the bedrock of success in the coming years. This will guard against dilution of effort and focus.

With any visitor economy development consideration needs to be given to the state of current public realm infrastructure and services, including roads, footpaths, signs, car parks, public lavatories and waste management to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that the visitor economy developments support improvements to the infrastructure and services, rather than just increasing usage.

The table summarises the collective view of stakeholders.

Positives	Work to Do	Negatives
LVEP status and new partnership with Telford & Wrekin	Optimising rail connectivity with multimodal connections, e.g. between Gobowen and Oswestry	Perception of a divide between the northern and southern regions and between Shrewsbury and the rest of the county
Improved relations between councils and DMO	Ensuring the reality of the destination can live up to the marketing promise	More diverse voices and opinions are needed in the sector
Potential for cross-border initiatives in the Marches (Cheshire, Herefordshire, Welsh border)	Continued improvement in generation and dissemination of insights and data especially visitor experience and evaluation	Lack of sufficient bed stock to meet potential
Shropshire Hills National Landscape holds the Sustainable Tourism Charter	Continuous practical support is needed for visitor economy businesses	Investor interest in larger projects is minimal
Development of Shrewsbury – independent retail and heritage, new bed stock 2025/2026	Innovation in the festivals and events sector to support long-standing festivals and introduce new concepts	There is poor/inadequate public transport choices and connectivity
Range of accommodation options, including motorhomes, glamping sites, pubs with rooms, boutique hotels, and Airbnb listings	More focus on residents as they play a key role in the visitor economy	Expenditure on raising awareness and profile is currently too low
Success of Business Boost training programme	Improved information and provision for individuals with disabilities	Businesses need support marketing specifically digital
Excellent food and drink offer	Potential positive impact of HS2 in Birmingham on surrounding area	Lack of understanding of and propensity to practice Regenerative Tourism
County wide network of TICs staffed by volunteers	A clearer strategy for group tourism	Consideration needs to be given to how increased levels of visitors could impact on local residents and what infrastructure and services needs to be developed to enhance the environment for both residents and visitors.
Independent and artisan businesses epitomising the county's independent spirit	More focus on the link between visitors and people coming to live and work in Shropshire. "What's good for visitors is also good for residents"	
	Create a culture where regenerative tourism is adopted by visitors, residents and businesses	



Policy context

Shropshire’s Destination Management Plan exists in a national, regional, and local context that is constantly changing. The Shropshire DMP draws from and supports a wide range of related strategies that touch the visitor economy tangentially or are closely interwoven with it. They are concerned with economic development, culture, landscapes, climate change, community resilience, skills and national policy.

Primary strategies for alignment	The benefits of alignment
Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy 2022–27	Focuses on issues of importance to tourism including jobs and workforce, skills and investment, strategic locations specifically towns (visitor hubs)
Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2024–29	Prioritises regenerative tourism. Covers a significant percentage of Shropshire and comprises one of the county’s key assets. The Shropshire Hills National Landscape Team works with partners to facilitate collaboration.
Shropshire’s Great Outdoors Strategy 2018–28	Describes improvements to essential visitor economy infrastructure and help promote the county’s rural assets to visitors. Project team in place to facilitate
Shropshire Destination Brand Strategy 2024	Embedding visitor economy into broader place branding and place narrative activity Amplification of key messages across multiple sectors to define Shropshire and increase awareness
Vibrant Shropshire, Cultural Strategy 2021–31	Cultural product is central to attracting visitors
Shropshire’s Climate Change Strategy to 2030	The context for a regenerative approach to tourism
Telford Destination Management Plan 2024–29	Destination partner in the Telford and Shropshire LVEP. Complimentary product, opportunities for collaboration
March the Marches Tourism Feasibility Study February 2025	Support for developing tourism strong alignment of products and experiences and mechanism for cross-border marketing
UK Tourism Strategy, DCMS/VisitEngland (in development)	Maximising opportunities for mutual support and securing benefits for Shropshire including marketing, training, business support and potential investment

Supporting strategies for alignment	The benefits of alignment
Shrewsbury BID business plan 2024-29	Destination management role focusing on local promotion, business support and place making.
Bid Oswestry Business Plan 2023-28	Destination management role focusing on local promotion, business support and place making.

The Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy is thematic in nature. Its focus is on supporting local businesses, strategic locations and employment and skills all of which are relevant to the visitor economy. Its key values of resilience, inclusivity, sustainability and well-being are shared by the DMP which has regenerative tourism running through its narrative and objectives. The need to work in partnership to leverage resource is common to both documents and they both highlight digital connectivity and sustainable transport infrastructure as priorities for economic success.

There is particularly close alignment between the DMP and three strategies that seek to shape and manage key visitor product: the Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Vibrant Shropshire Cultural Strategy, and Shropshire’s Great Outdoors Strategy. All three have influenced the content of this plan and are reflected in its vision, objectives and priorities.

A new strategy for tourism in the UK is under development, led by DCMS and due for publication in autumn 2025.

VisitEngland are also developing new domestic segmentation which will help guide destination marketing strategy.





Visitor economy SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
Geographical location, proximity to 3 large population centres, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region and the West Midlands. Crewe Station is just 30 minutes from Shrewsbury	Poor awareness nationally
Outstanding landscapes, three of national importance, with characteristics stemming from the county's geology, wildlife and geography	Weak differentiation from other English destinations
Share of two World Heritage Sites (Ironbridge and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct) and strong supporting heritage product	Out of date image and reputation
Significant quantity of non-serviced accommodation	Lack of serviced bed stock
Retail, hospitality and evening economy offer in Shrewsbury	Few all-weather attractions
Regenerative and experiential tourism initiatives centred across Shropshire's varied landscapes, including Shropshire Hills, the River Severn, the canal network and the Meres and Mosses	Constrained capacity of organisations and businesses
Strong market towns with good tourism offer including Oswestry, Ludlow, Whitchurch, Church Stretton, Bridgnorth, Ellesmere, Shifnal, Wem, Broseley, Cleobury Mortimer, Clun, Market Drayton, Much Wenlock, Broseley and Shrewsbury	Over reliance on day trips
Crowd free destination, space for freedom and escape	Rural transport options and connectivity challenges e.g. rail connections to Oswestry
Achievement of LVEP status with Telford and Wrekin	Poor digital connectivity in many areas
Shrewsbury & Oswestry have been designated a coach friendly towns by CPT (Confederation of Passenger Transport)	Fragmented visitor information
Extensive rights of way network with 300 published routes	Perceived lack of family fun despite some quality family attractions
The canal network	Stakeholder perception of divide that favours Shrewsbury and Shropshire Hills

Opportunities

Bed stock growth opportunities in Shrewsbury

Feasibility study for Shrewsbury Castle to reimagine its purpose

Growth of independent hospitality and retail offer

Ludlow's food provenance and culinary expertise

Development of county wide regenerative initiatives in responsible transport and biodiversity led by examples in the Shropshire Hills National Landscape and Ellesmere Canal Basin Development

Large urban catchment area, West Midlands and Greater Manchester

Complimentary visitor offer in Telford and Wrekin e.g. family offer, business tourism, serviced accommodation

Potential of partnership with Harper Adams for rural expertise

The Marches Forward Partnership for cross border initiatives with Wales

Support from VisitEngland and the LVEP network

Recent traction in PR and marketing, a base to build from

Strong (ish) festival calendar and events expertise, with new product in development

RAF Museum Midlands (formerly Cosford) wider national profile

Growing popularity of outdoor challenge and trail events e.g. Shropshire Way, Triathlon's and other endurance events across the county.

Increased access via electric bike network

New partnership around the Great Outdoors project producing comprehensive online information fresh marketing collateral related to the rural offer

Develop the Shropshire Way as a signature walking route with accommodation and food and drink options and weekend highlighted itineraries

3 Counties Connected Community Rail Partnership

National Trust taking over the Ironbridge Gorge Museums

Developments at Attingham Park

Threats

Funding insecurity for key organisations and agencies particularly Shropshire Council and Visit Shropshire impacting on delivery

Lack of a local plan for commercial development, hindering private sector development

Domestic competitors moving faster, Cheshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire all have more bed stock and wet weather options

Impact of macro factors (not specific to Shropshire):

- cost of living crisis less money for leisure
- cost of doing business squeezing the sector
- international competition, particularly from Europe
- Climate change – flooding, nature loss and risk of large scale fires affecting air quality and carbon storage
- Poor image (post Brexit, weather, gloom and doom) and poor value perception of UK
- Wildlife and habitat decline



THREE-YEAR GROWTH PLAN 2026-2029

SECTION 2

The Shropshire Destination Management Plan (DMP) is the blueprint for how the county intends to develop and manage its visitor economy between 2026 and 2029. It sets out how the county will increase the value of tourism, improve collaboration across Shropshire and beyond, increase the destination's profile to attract visitors and strengthen the regenerative approach to visitor economy development.

Our aim is to foster....

A strong county-wide destination partnership that encourages all visitors to enjoy Shropshire's precious natural landscapes, world-renowned built heritage and individual spirit in a way that safeguards them now and for future generations.





OBJECTIVES & TARGETS

Objective 1

Adjust the ratio of staying and day visitors.

Focus on adjusting the balance in favour of staying visitors to grow the value of the visitor economy without compromising its uncrowded spaces.

Target: Move from a 86:14 ratio to 80:20

Objective 2

Develop effective partnerships.

Embrace partnership working between organisations and businesses, internally and externally, as the key to wider success and benefits for all

Target:

Establish 5 partnership working groups reflecting different interest groups and sectors

Objective 3

Improve image, identity and awareness of Shropshire as a place to visit.

Create a distinctive identity for Shropshire that is differentiated from other English rural destinations and promoted effectively.

Targets:

Growth in consumer awareness and change in perception of Shropshire's visitor offer

Objective 4

Establish a national reputation as a regenerative destination.

Establish Shropshire's reputation for excellence in regenerative tourism.

Targets:

Increase the number of community & sector led regenerative projects

National recognition for responsible tourism development



PRIORITIES

(1) More bed stock

Making it easier and more attractive to take a short break in key towns and The Shropshire Hills, couple with a forensic analysis of how to maximise occupancy. Ideally an accommodation needs study for the whole county should be commissioned including serviced accommodation and motorhome provision.

(2) A clear and differentiated identity

Producing clear visitor proposition based on the county's strongest assets, hero products and spirit of independence.

(3) Integrated and targeted marketing

Taking a whole destination, multi-platform approach to marketing that targets staying visitors and off-season visits.

(4) Regenerative tourism initiatives

Developing new products and experiences that deliver net benefit to the environment, economy and society establishing a national reputation as a sustainable destination

(5) Partnership development

Creating a destination partnership that can embrace all and that brings people together.

Developing the governance and operational model for the Telford and Shropshire LVEP.

(6) An evaluation framework that can inform activity

Based on economic impact survey e.g. STEAM and a visitor survey every three years and working with partners on data sharing, generate objective performance and evaluation metrics.

(7) A reputation as an accessible and inclusive destination

Instilling a determination across the sector to ensure everyone is welcome.





Museum & Art Gallery

PRESENTED BY THE SHROPSHIRE
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY 1995

PRESENTED BY THE SHROPSHIRE
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY 1995

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Four guiding principles underpin this plan and will influence the way that it is delivered. They are embedding regenerative tourism in the thinking and actions of visitor economy stakeholders, a partnership approach to planning and delivery and evidence-based decision making.

1. Regenerative tourism

Regenerative tourism has become a central concept world-wide as the tourism industry picks up on increasing consumer trends to choose sustainable options when travelling and recognises that tourism must deliver a net gain for communities and the environment if it is to be resilient and successful in the longer term.

Shropshire has started pursuing a regenerative approach to tourism development. The Government is committed to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030. This is guiding National, Regional and grass-roots community initiatives across the UK. An increasing emphasis on landscapes as a source of therapy for mental wellbeing provides a natural bridge between tourism and health and demonstrates that the visitor economy can play a significant role in delivering on public sector priorities.

Putting regenerative tourism at the heart of this DMP will ensure we will learn from and build on existing initiatives with the aim of securing a national reputation in this area.





2. Everyone welcome – an accessible destination

Shropshire is committed to delivering a high-quality, inclusive visitor experience that welcomes everyone. Accessibility is at the heart of this vision, with ongoing efforts to improve both physical and digital access across the county. This includes

- Enhancing accessibility at key visitor sites and transport hubs
- Providing clear, comprehensive pre and post arrival information to support trip planning
- Actively participating in Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) accessibility initiatives
- Offering regular training and updates for front of house staff, including hotel teams, taxi drivers and attraction managers

The aim is simple: for every visitor to feel genuinely welcomed, respected and valued.

Globally, around 15% of travellers identify as living with a disability – whether physical, sensory,

cognitive or neurodiverse. Many of these disabilities are not visible, and with an ageing population, this number is set to grow. Shropshire recognises the importance of continuous improvement in its offer to its visitors and is investing in training and development to ensure the visitor economy is equipped to meet diverse needs.

Visit England has developed a comprehensive Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Toolkit, which provides practical guidance for businesses. Many of the recommended changes are low-cost and easy to implement yet can significantly enhance the visitor experience.

Investing in accessibility also makes strong business sense. The 'Purple Pound' – the spending power of the disabled people and their families is substantial at £14.6bn per annum. These visitors often travel in larger groups, demonstrate strong brand loyalty and actively promote destinations that serve them well.

By embracing inclusivity, Shropshire not only does the right thing but also builds a stronger, more resilient visitor economy.

3. Partnership

Team Shropshire

To be a good regional and national partner our internal partnership needs to be as strong as possible. There is work to do to minimise a perceived North/South divide and strengthen public/private cooperation.

Key organisations that could become part of Shropshire's destination management partnership are Shropshire Council, Visit Shropshire, The Shropshire Hills Partnership, the Great Outdoors project team, Oswestry Borderland Tourism, Business Improvement Districts in Shrewsbury and Oswestry, town and parish councils and sub county destination groups plus specialist organisations involved in culture, education and business support.

Telford and Shropshire LVEP

As the LVEP develops governance mechanisms and a shared growth plan there are significant opportunities for collaboration across the new LVEP geography. DMPs for each area form the basis for identifying where working together will produce greater impact and economies of scale.

Regional partnership

The Marches Forward Partnership has identified several projects for cross border cooperation between England/Wales, for example the restoration of the Montgomery Canal. There are also opportunities for tactical partnerships with neighbouring counties including Cheshire, Herefordshire and the West Midlands Growth Company and with organisations such as the Three Counties Connected Community Rail Partnership and the Canal and River Trust.

In the longer term there are opportunities for us to participate in thematic partnerships nationally and potentially internationally. Examples include partnering with Essex to replicate the Tudor era Grand Tour that involved London, Oxford and Shropshire and strong links with Shakespeare's England.

Led by the sector

Shropshire Council will facilitate at least five partnership working groups to promote best practice sharing, identify common issues, and collaborate on solutions and project delivery. These groups foster innovation, strengthen county wide networks, and help develop effective, resilient responses to sector needs.



Our partners	Shared priorities and projects
Telford and Wrekin	Seasonality, thematic marketing, business support, research and data, leisure extenders for business visitors
Marches Forward Partnership	Cross-border marketing, sustainable tourism
Neighbouring counties	Tactical marketing regionally and nationally
West Midlands Growth Company	Tactical marketing e.g. transport deals
VisitEngland	Travel trade, research and data, business support, skills and training, LVEP network
VisitBritain	Marketing

4. Evidence-based decision making

Shropshire currently lacks comprehensive and up to date information about the performance of the destination, its visitor demographics and their experience of visiting. Information gaps make it difficult to quantify the contribution that the visitor economy makes towards the health of the economy, environment, society, and the population. It is also challenging to identify actions that will make a positive difference or measure our success.

Recent investment in the STEAM economic impact study, starting in 2019 and more local data from Shrewsbury and Oswestry BIDs has begun to rectify this. Visit England's data and insights working group will potentially fill more gaps as they turn national level data into destination level intelligence. A priority within the lifetime of this DMP is delivering a long overdue visitor survey and implementing a robust evaluation framework to measure progress.



MARKETS & VISITORS

In the absence of data and insights into markets, visitor types and the visitor experience, target markets and visitor segments are identified using general indicators such as market proximity, product strengths, visitor trends and the visitor personas described in Shropshire’s destination brand toolkit. The new domestic audience segmentation being developed by VisitEngland will support the marketing strategy.

Markets

There is a general acceptance among stakeholders and businesses that Shropshire’s main appeal is for domestic rather than international markets. It is recognised that there is a small but important international market, and this needs to be nurtured and whenever possible attendance at international events to keep abreast of trends and meet operators should be encouraged but it is not viable to proactively market the destination internationally.

Domestic markets are more likely to be regional than national. Exceptions are the draw of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites at Ironbridge Gorge and Pontcysyllte and the presence of English Heritage and National Trust properties all of which are promoted nationally through their own marketing channels.





There is more work to do on the types of tourism that are most beneficial to Shropshire. Oswestry and Shrewsbury's coach friendly status suggests group travel may be a market to target but whether it is relevant to the whole county and what type of group travel is most beneficial is unclear. Market Drayton is also in the process of becoming Coach Friendly.

Shropshire's target markets in broad terms are the large population centres that are close by, have good transport connections and are within a comfortable travel time for both staying and day visits. These centres have an estimated 8 million plus potential visitors within a 1.5hr travel time Shropshire. They are:

- The West Midlands
- Liverpool city region and Greater Manchester
- Neighbouring counties including Staffordshire and Cheshire
- Welsh border towns such as Wrexham

Recent marketing campaigns have targeted these areas.



Visitors

YouGov conducted brand strategy research in 2023 with prospective visitors from the Northwest, Midlands, and Wales. When asked about their preferences for a short break, the top responses were “relax and unwind,” “nature,” “appealing towns and villages,” and “history and heritage,” which align with the Shropshire visitor offer.

However the research concluded that about half had never visited Shropshire or were unsure if they had. Those who had visited tended to be older. The main reason cited for visiting was to “go somewhere different” and for not visiting, the main reason was a lack of awareness and little understanding of what it offers.

Efforts are therefore needed to raise awareness of Shropshire and its location, highlighting positive attributes reported by visitors such as “unspoiled,” “creative,” “rural but not remote,” “independent,” “quirky,” and “varied.”

Marketing channels should prioritise search tools like Google and Tripadvisor, as well as broadcast channels and public relations.

The research concluded that Shropshire offers many of the qualities that certain visitors are now seeking, and Shropshire’s brand toolkit, created as a result of the research, identifies three leisure audiences described according to their **mindset**

and **attitudes**. Partners across the county are now using the brand in effective and creative ways to raise profile and create a stronger identity for the county.




The visitor economy should adopt these audiences as appropriate and use the toolkit to inform the way we market the county. The audiences are summarised in the table below which also identifies the main visitor types and core products that are likely to attract and delight them.

A New Brand for Shropshire

The ‘In Shropshire’ Brand plays a vital role in supporting the county’s Destination Management Plan by weaving together a distinctive visual and narrative identity. Its uplifting tone of voice, paired with inspiring copy, high-quality photography, and expressive illustrations, brings to life Shropshire’s unique appeal. Carefully chosen fonts and a harmonious colour palette reflect the area’s character—natural, welcoming, and vibrant. The brand’s flexibility allows it to champion everything from historic sites to outdoor adventures, always anchoring its message around the central promise that ‘life’s better in Shropshire.’ This unifying approach inspires visitors and stakeholders to share in Shropshire’s story and future potential.

[shropshire-brand-guidelines-v19-v2.pdf](#)



Audience	Key characteristics	Visitor types	Core product
Rebalancers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> live in city/town suburbs. working, financially secure but look for value for money options. 3-4 short breaks a year choose great accommodation. value nature, outdoors, time with family into discovery and being first to find new experiences looking for relaxation, escape and freedom from the everyday 	Families including multi-generational	<p>Ironbridge Gorge National Trust Properties Severn Valley Railway Ludlow Castle Shropshire Hills Park Hall Farm Hawkestone Park & Follies River Severn activities Outdoor activities Canal networks Discovery Centre</p> 
Unplug & indulge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> live in city/town suburbs. working or early retired, disposable income multiple short breaks choose high quality accommodation. value luxury and indulgence into exploration, towns and villages as well as countryside looking for the authentic and individual 	Couples	<p>Shrewsbury Market towns RAF Museum Midlands Shropshire Hills Outdoor activities Independent retail Food Wroxeter Roman City English Heritage properties Ellesmere Alderford</p> 
Active explorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> live in city/town suburbs. working or early retired, disposable income multiple short breaks choose high quality accommodation. value luxury and indulgence into exploration, towns and villages as well as countryside looking for the authentic and individual 	Couples, families with older children, and small groups	<p>Shropshire Hills River Severn activities Cruising on canals Shrewsbury Prison Attingham Park Outdoor activities</p> 

ACTION PLAN 2026-2029

Priority	Rationale	Actions	Lead/support
More bed stock	Longer stays by visitors significantly boost the overall GVA and generate more employment.	Commission accommodation study and create evidence base for investment	Shropshire Council
		Promote diversification of accommodation types including more accessible rooms	Shropshire Council
		Encourage more accommodation development in Shrewsbury and Shropshire Hills	Shrewsbury BID, Shropshire Hills Partnership/ Shropshire Council
A clear and differentiated identity.	English rural counties face challenges in distinguishing themselves. Shropshire is enhancing its county brand, and its tourism identity can utilise this for increased recognition.	Rigorously apply brand guidelines to all destination marketing communications	Visit Shropshire/local DMOs
		Raise awareness and encourage greater and consistent use of the In Shropshire Brand within the sector	Visit Shropshire, local DMOs/ visitor economy businesses
		Develop events that reflect Shropshire's identity, have visitor appeal and are easily accessible	Visit Shropshire + partners

Priority	Rationale	Actions	Lead/Support
Integrated and targeted marketing	With limited funds and resources, Shropshire should aim to communicate effectively to a targeted audience rather than spreading their message thinly across a broader audience.	Harmonise and reinforce core messages across all channels	National Landscape Team
		Provide Visit England with frequent updates and fresh content	Visit Shropshire
		Develop shareable content for all partners	Visit Shropshire
		Align customer segments with media strategy	LVEP/ Visitor Economy businesses
		Review activity since 2022 and summarise learnings	Visit Shropshire/local DMOs
		Explore marketing collaboration opportunities with Telford and Wrekin	Visit Shropshire
		Promote short breaks and shoulder periods to optimise occupancy	Visit Shropshire/ visitor economy businesses
Regenerative and Accessible Tourism Initiatives	<p>Shropshire's residents and businesses are enthusiastically embracing this movement and aim to be a centre of excellence.</p> <p>Placing a significant focus on the quality of the welcome is crucial for attracting more visitors and delivering a positive experience.</p> <p>Success will aid in distinguishing the destination, improving satisfaction and contribute to climate goals.</p>	Provide case studies of existing initiatives and training/support to businesses	Shropshire Hills National Landscape Team/Shropshire Council
		Provide training and support to businesses to increase their sustainability and accessibility	Shropshire Council /Shropshire Hills National Landscape Team
		Identify key partner Community and Sector led tourism initiatives & provide support	Shropshire Council /Shropshire Hills National Landscape Team
		Put initiatives forward for awards locally and nationally	LVEP/ Visitor Economy businesses
		Increase awareness among businesses of the opportunities around accessibility and use the VE toolkit	Shropshire Council/Bids
		Increase the number of VE businesses with access statements.	VE businesses

Priority	Rationale	Actions	Lead/support
Partnership development	<p>An effective destination management partnership will make the most of existing resources, remove duplication and increase impact.</p> <p>Developing the Telford and Shropshire LVEP will identify new opportunities, drive efficiency and increase impact.</p>	Establish four free to access meetings per year for businesses	Visit Shropshire
		Establish a forum for county level and local DMOs to collaborate	Visit Shropshire/ Shropshire Council
		Work with Telford and Wrekin to establish the governance and operational framework for the LVEP	Visit Shropshire/ Shropshire Council
		Create Visit Shropshire awards (potentially with Telford and Wrekin) as an LVEP Project	Visit Shropshire
An evaluation framework that can inform activity	<p>STEAM provides a baseline, but more data is important to make good decisions in future</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate regenerative tourism activity</p>	Commission a visitor survey	Visit Shropshire
		Engage with partners on data and research especially transport providers	Shropshire Council/BIDs, large tourism businesses
Enhance Shropshire's product and reputation as an accessible and inclusive destination.	<p>A significant % of visiting groups include those who may be living with disabilities or who have other needs. Everyone should feel welcome and includes</p>	Ingrain the principle of the Visit England Accessibility toolkit within the sector.	Shropshire Council
		Ensure imagery is positive and inclusive	All partners

Glossary

Destination Management Plan (DMP)

A shared plan that sets out how tourism will be developed, managed and promoted in Shropshire over a set period (2026–2029).

Destination Management Organisation (DMO)

An organisation that helps manage and promote tourism in a place, supports local tourism businesses and improves the visitor experience (e.g. Visit Shropshire).

Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)

A government-recognised partnership that brings councils, tourism organisations and businesses together to coordinate tourism planning, marketing and investment. Shropshire works in an LVEP with Telford & Wrekin.

Visitor Economy

All the economic activity created by visitors, including accommodation, food and drink, attractions, transport, retail and the jobs these support.

Regenerative Tourism

An approach to tourism that aims to leave places better than before by delivering positive benefits for local communities, the environment and the local economy – not just reducing harm.

Sustainable Tourism

Tourism that meets today's needs without damaging the ability of future generations to enjoy the destination.

STEAM

A national model used to estimate visitor numbers, visitor spending and tourism-related jobs. It helps track how well the visitor economy is performing.

Staying Visitors

Visitors who stay overnight in paid or unpaid accommodation.

Day Visitors

Visitors who do not stay overnight.

Bed Stock

The total number of available accommodation beds in a destination.

Serviced Accommodation

Places to stay where services such as daily cleaning and meals are provided, for example hotels and B&Bs.

Non-Serviced Accommodation

Places to stay without daily services, such as self-catering cottages, caravans, camping and glamping.

National Landscape

A nationally protected landscape (formerly called an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The Shropshire Hills National Landscape is a key tourism asset.

Accessible and Inclusive Tourism

Tourism that ensures places, experiences and information are welcoming and usable for everyone, including people with disabilities, older visitors and families.

Purple Pound

The spending power of disabled people and their families, highlighting the economic value of accessibility.

Hero Products

Key attractions or experiences that best represent the destination and are used to attract visitors.

Visitor Proposition

A clear statement of what Shropshire offers visitors and why it is distinctive.

Brand Toolkit

Guidance and materials that help partners present Shropshire consistently, including messages, audiences and visual identity.

Shoulder Periods

Times just outside the busiest tourism seasons, such as spring and autumn.

Evidence-Based Decision Making

Using data and research (such as STEAM and visitor surveys) to guide decisions rather than assumptions.

SWOT Analysis

A planning tool that looks at Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

What next?

The DMP sets out the strategic direction for tourism in Shropshire and should be used by stakeholders to develop and deliver their own strategies, operational delivery plans and projects to help achieve the DMPs objectives and priorities.

The Role of Stakeholders

Stakeholders include Shropshire Council, Town and Parish Councils, Destination Management and Marketing Organisations, such as Visit Shropshire, South Shropshire Hills, Oswestry Borderland Tourism, sector and special interest representative groups such as church tourism, equine tourism and canal tourism.

Stakeholders are encouraged to use the DMP to:

- use the plan to develop and deliver their own local plans and projects including:
 - research, consultation and situation analysis to identify where the gaps are
 - identification of projects and initiatives that will fill the gaps and who will lead on the projects
 - secure funding
 - deliver the project and initiatives
 - monitor and evaluate projects
- Use the In Shropshire brand to promote their own area

Where resources allow Shropshire Council will:

- support stakeholder to develop and deliver plans that reflect their specific area of interest or geography by:
 - signposting to relevant research and resources
 - supporting appropriate funding applications
 - supporting stakeholders work with different council teams, such as planning, transport and highways
- facilitate relevant partnerships to encourage collaborative working across the county
- proactively fund raise and deliver projects that support the aims of the DMP
- Facilitate sector specific training
- Maintain, distribute and assist partners to use the 'In Shropshire Brand';
- provide regular communications relating to the visitor economy
- advocate for tourism on a local, regional and national basis
- work with Visit Shropshire to market the county
- work with national and regional partners for the mutual benefit of the visitor economy
- be a lead partner in the Telford and Shropshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership

Where resources allow Visit Shropshire will:

- market the county regionally, nationally and internationally
- work with transport providers to increase connectivity and travel choices
- provide broad sector support
- research, monitor and evaluate the the visitor economy in Shropshire and publish research
- be a lead partner in the Local Visitor Economy Partnership





THE DAILY GRIND

IN
SHROPSHIRE

Prepared by Katrina Kerr, Overwood Consulting and
Melanie Sensicle, Melanie Sensicle Consulting Ltd in
collaboration with Shropshire Council and
Visit Shropshire

FOR
SHROPSHIRE

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