

Partnership Statement

Driving Sustainable Economic Growth through Heritage and the Visitor Economy

England's heritage makes a vital contribution to our economy and quality of life. There are opportunities to strengthen this contribution through greater integration with the rapidly growing visitor economy, which itself relies heavily on heritage as a key driver. If further growth is to be achieved, the focus needs to be not only on promotion of heritage assets, or initiatives to raise productivity and competitiveness, but also on maintenance, conservation and product development to drive up the quality of the visitor experience.

VisitEngland and Historic England recognise that through joint strategic activity and alignment of priorities, greater benefits can be realised for the economy, as well as increasing the effectiveness and impact of their core activities. We share common goals and objectives that are embedded throughout this partnership statement. These include:

- Delivering sustainable economic growth through supporting owners, local authorities, voluntary organisations, communities and visitors to appreciate, enjoy and look after England's heritage.
- Championing England's heritage with national and local organisations and integrating it into national and local planning to help realise its visitor economy growth potential.
- Helping people appreciate and enjoy England's heritage through the continued promotion of historic destinations.

In addition both sectors are facing similar funding and delivery challenges. The organisational and support landscape has changed significantly as a result, and provides an imperative to look for greater collaboration at national and local levels, with the national organisations leading the way through this partnership statement.

This statement outlines the strategic priority areas that we will work together on over the next three years. These are the areas that we believe will have the biggest impact on sustainable economic growth. We will develop pilot and exemplar activity across these areas, as resources permit. Delivery will be reviewed after three years and future priorities for the partnership will be established. A separate Action Plan sets out agreed specific activities.

The Parties¹ to this statement:**Historic England**

[Historic England](#) is the public body that looks after England's historic environment. We champion historic places, helping people understand, value and care for them.

We do this by offering advice, expertise and guidance in managing change within England's historic places, supporting the many individuals and organisations that own and care for our heritage. We also make the case for investment in the historic environment and the economic benefits that this can bring in terms of tourism through sensitive management of historic buildings and areas. This in turn ensures a sustainable future for an important driver behind the visitor economy.

VisitEngland

[VisitEngland](#) is the national tourist board for England, responsible for leading and driving forward the quality, competitiveness and sustainable growth of England's Visitor Economy by providing strategic direction, intelligence and coordinated marketing for the sector.

Tourism presents a key opportunity for sustainable economic growth, contributing to employment and business creation and contributing to quality of life for the population.

The organisation is the custodian of the [National Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010 – 2020](#) – England's tourism growth strategy - and is responsible for driving its implementation through partnership with stakeholders at the national and local levels.

What we agree to do:**Priority 1: Building partnerships and collaboration to support heritage through good destination management**

We will help facilitate collaboration at the national and local level to support better understanding of the growth potential of the historic environment and its contribution to destination management. Information will be shared between organisations and individuals, supporting joint working at operational level.

We will do this by:

¹ Historic England will become two separate organisations in spring 2015: Historic England (what is currently the National Collections Group of the existing EH organisation) and Historic England. This agreement applies only to those parts of Historic England that will form the new Historic England, and from spring 2015 Historic England only.

- Collaborating on research priorities and analysis of issues/trends in our sectors and with our stakeholders to inform planning and decision-making to help support future growth.
- Encouraging greater collaboration between organisations at the local level, in particular local authorities, Destination Organisations, National Park Authorities and Areas of Outstanding Natural beauty, increasing awareness of projects, events and programmes to aid planning to achieve greater economic impact. This will be achieved through:
 - Strengthening the current inter-relationships between VisitEngland, Destination Organisations, Historic England and other local stakeholders, particularly to identify opportunities for capacity building.
 - Ensuring that Destination Management Plans reflect the potential of the local historic environment.
 - Showcasing case studies where closer collaboration has achieved results so that local areas can learn from each other and ensuring widespread dissemination.

Priority 2: Realising the visitor economy growth potential of heritage assets

England is abundant in heritage assets that make its offer to visitors rich and authentic. There are opportunities to achieve greater economic growth through these using the visitor economy, but successful delivery also requires support and investment in promotion, infrastructure and the public realm, as well as effective local planning and development processes, and skilled staff to drive up the quality of the visitor experience.

We will do this by:

- Identification of redundant and underused heritage assets and heritage at risk with visitor economy growth potential.
- Working with partners to identify and communicate funding opportunities that will help unlock the potential of heritage assets to drive visitor economy growth.
- Ensuring the local planning process is effective in supporting the connections between heritage and the visitor economy, helping to realise the growth potential.
- Promotion of the heritage offer to overseas and domestic markets to drive visitor economy growth.

Priority 3: Supporting local solutions that enable visitor economy growth and the sustainable development, management and conservation of England's historic environment

Growth through heritage and the visitor economy must not be delivered at any cost. It must be sustainable through the involvement of communities, owners, businesses and visitors in order to deliver outcomes that achieve growth while also respecting and conserving heritage assets and historic places. VisitEngland and Historic England will support local solutions that reconcile these two objectives.

We will do this by:

- Helping to increase community awareness and leadership of heritage assets and supporting communities to help realise the visitor economy growth potential.
- Encouraging local solutions to manage the impacts of tourism, between businesses, heritage and environmental asset managers, enabling income from tourism and visitors to contribute.
- Responding to identified skills gaps in the visitor economy and heritage sectors to support the development and effective use of the local historic environment to enhance the visitor experience and drive tourism growth.

This partnership statement was agreed on 22 October 2014

between Historic England
and VisitEngland

REVIEW DATE: 21 October 2017