

2019 TOURISM CONFERENCE



*Developing places
that people
want to
visit*



In July 2019, the government launched the Tourism Sector Deal as part of its Industrial Strategy. The Deal reinforced the importance of the UK's £23 billion tourism industry offering encouragement and support to the small businesses, entrepreneurs and innovators who are expected to be the backbone to a 25% growth in the tourism and visitor economy over the next five years. Included in the Deal is the introduction of up to five new Tourism Zones, each of which will be supported to bring their offer up to world class destination standard.

In October 2018 Epping Forest, Broxbourne and Vibrant Partnerships for Lee Valley (who were already working collaboratively), together with Harlow, East Herts and Uttlesford, met to discuss the possibilities and opportunities of cross-border working to create a tourist offer more appealing and persuasive than the sum of its parts. Commissioned tourism data revealed the combined area already attracted 14 million tourist visits, generated £880m in revenue and was responsible for 15,600 jobs representing 6.8% of the area's employment. Work has already begun on mapping tourism assets and the creation of an overall brand which, alongside with the data gathered and working relationship established, put this project in a strong position to mount a successful bid as one of the new Tourism Zones.

The 2018 Tourism Conference introduced delegates to the exciting prospects of cross border working and the 2019 Tourism Conference took as its theme, continuing the joint working process in line with the requirements of a successful Tourism Zone bid. The workshops explored seven of the key themes required in a successful bid. The views of delegates are detailed in this report.

Welcome from Cllr. Richard Bassett

The Chairman of Epping Forest District, Cllr. Richard Bassett, opened the conference and welcomed delegates. He spoke about the importance of the visitor economy to the district and beyond, introducing the wider participation of neighbours Harlow, Broxbourne, East Herts and Uttlesford, all of whom were represented in the room. Richard reminded everyone that the day was all about building the tourism and visitor offer to generate and share economic prosperity across the shared geography. Reminding everyone about the key role skills development would play as employment grew, Richard was pleased to see staff and students from tree local Further Education Colleges in attendance. He ended by thanking the Marriott hotel which, once again, had sponsored the event.

Why Tourism is important – Room to Grow

Del Goddard, Chairman of the Tourism and Visitor Board, spoke about the importance of the visitor economy and the opportunities predicted future growth will bring. He outlined the work already being undertaken by the cross-border group and the attractiveness of the combined area to a wide range of audiences. These include internal and London-based visitors as well as in-bound travellers flying into Stansted and Southen Airports or driving from Harwich and Tilbury ferry ports.

Del then presented the latest tourism value figures which show increases in all areas except overnight stays, which continue a slow decline due to the shortage of



accommodation in the district. Whilst growth has not been as spectacular as last year's 7%, it sits around 3% in line with the average growth over previous years.

The overall value of the tourism and visitor economy to our district continues to rise and in 2018 reached £232,766,600. Local jobs in this sector rose by 3% to just over 4,000 and tourism now represents 9% of local employment. The number of people visiting our area for holiday or business fell slightly whilst those visiting friends or relatives rose slightly. The places that people spend their money remained much as before although the amount they spent rose. Day trip numbers have

Amount Generated by Visits



Amount Spent in the Local Area



Purpose of Visit to the Area



Jobs Supported by Tourism



Areas of Spend



Trips Taken in the Area



Data source - Destination Research

risen by just 1% whilst the income generated has risen by 4% which, seen alongside the 3% increase in employment, indicates that our day visitors are doing and spending more, reflecting our growing offer.

Working alongside our cross-border neighbours, we have commissioned 'Cambridge Model' reports for Broxbourne and Harlow and they show similar growth. This contrasts favourably with the national and regional picture where holidays decreased by 4% in England and the East of England saw a 12% drop in overnight stays and an expenditure drop of 8%. We have also commissioned a report for the London Borough of Waltham Forest, our neighbours to the south. They share with us, important green corridors such as the Lee Valley and Epping Forest and are interested in the benefits a successful Tourism Zone bid would bring.

A full breakdown of the headline figures for Epping Forest District tourism, with comparison to previous years, is shown in the panel alongside.

Towards a new Tourism Zone

The District's Tourism Manager, Quentin Buller, outlined the aims of the Government's new Tourism Sector Deal and the expectations of a successful bid to become a Tourism Zone.

Launched in June 2019, the Tourism Sector Deal is part of the Government's Industrial Strategy and plans to grow 9 million additional visitors by 2025. As well as expanding the range of destinations, it sees extending the season beyond the peak June to August period and increased productivity by improving skills and harnessing new technology, as key to reaping significant economic benefits. It also has ambitions for the UK to become Europe's leading destination for tourists with disabilities.

Increasing our skills base will be delivered by mentoring existing employees within the sector, creating two new tourism-specific qualifications and creating 10,000 new apprenticeships in tourism and hospitality. New technology will support small businesses, entrepreneurs and innovators harnessing the data-driven economy via an independent data hub. This will be fed by up-to-date information from sources such as attractions and booking sites, travel and financial data and visitor's online activities. Conference centres will benefit from a £250,000 digital connectivity fund and will be included in an International Business Events Action Plan aimed at making the UK a premier choice for international conferences, gatherings and meetings.

As part of the Sector Deal, it is planned to create up to five new Tourism Zones and it is anticipated that the zones will cover a mix of rural, coastal and urban locations.

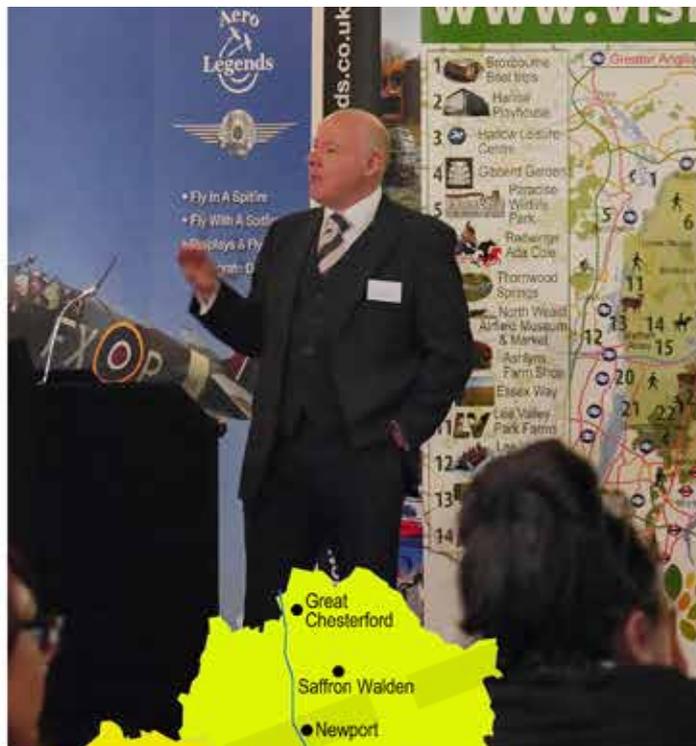
Quentin went on to explain that the cross-border work already undertaken gives our combined area a head start as our initiative already meets all the requirements of a successful Tourism Zone bid. We have created a geography with combined assets that will create a destination far more attractive than the sum of its individual offers and benefits from excellent transport and digital connectivity. The joint working is led by Local Authorities who see the visitor economy as a key area for economic growth and is enthusiastically welcomed and endorsed by local tourism-related businesses. The district is also leading on revitalising the Green Arc, protecting, expanding and linking our natural habitats to the benefit of locals and visitors and the future communities of our new garden towns.

Our cross-border work is given an additional impetus by the opportunity to bid for Tourism Zone status and the emphasis now placed on the various strands underway, will be aligned with the bid template. This will include prioritising areas such as green tourism, accessibility and sustainability and sharing more detail of our work with the wider strategic organisations covering our areas. We are already working with local skills providers and colleagues who have placed our combined area at the forefront of digital innovation and we are therefore pleased to see these areas recognised as key drivers within the Tourism Sector Deal.

Encouraging input from those with a local knowledge and perspective, the workshop themes for this year's conference reflected seven key themes seen as important to our Tourism Zone bid. These are (in no particular order): Taking advantage of digital and data; Accessibility and inclusivity; Extending the season; Building the skills; Building and marketing the brand; Sustainable transport and Green Tourism. Each workshop group was facilitated by someone with relevant expertise for each theme.

Developing an Economic Strategy for our place

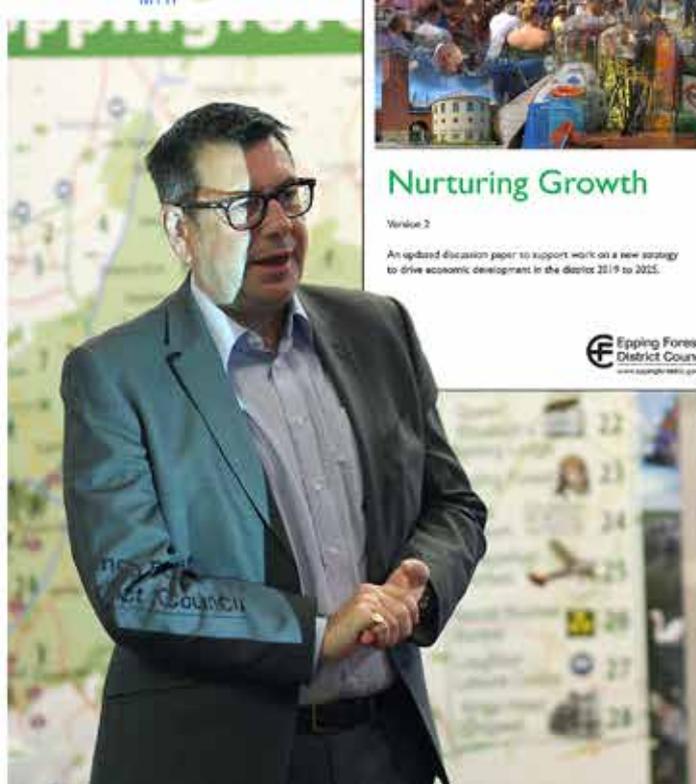
John Houston spoke next and introduced Epping Forest District Council's draft strategy for economic development. A document called Nurturing Growth had been produced which detailed the strategy and invited feedback. Copies were available at the conference or could be downloaded and delegates were invited to comment via feedback forms. John reminded everyone that developing the district's tourism and visitor economy was one of the key strands of the commitment with a section of the document was dedicated to tourism. Other themes in the document directly addressed those areas highlighted as key to a Tourism Zone bid including infrastructure and transport, partnership working, skills and employment, entrepreneurs and small businesses and supporting rural economies.



Nurturing Growth

Version 2

An updated discussion paper to support work on a new strategy to drive economic development in the district 2019 to 2025.



Workshops

Following a coffee break and opportunity to network or visit partners stalls, the workshops commenced with delegates choosing to contribute to facilitated group discussion on one of seven themes. The outcomes were shared in a plenary session facilitated by Jacqueline Eggleston from the City of London / Epping Forest and the feedback can be summarised as follows:

Table 1: Taking advantage of digital and data

Facilitated by Mike Warr

Essex & Herts Digital Innovation Zone

Offer free wifi connection in the district's town centres and tourism centres.

Use free wifi to welcome visitors, promote what's on, carry out surveys and build data.

Stream events live.

Create an app offering loyalty and discount schemes.

Use Digital Reconstruction and Augmented Reality (AR) to enhance the tourism experience.

Learn from others and offer digital/online/social media advice to local businesses.

Learn from data -who, when, where, what - and create end-to-end digital communication.

Table 2: Accessibility and inclusivity

Facilitated by Stella Morris

The Royal Gunpowder Mills

Experience-based tourism.

Remember not all disabilities are physical/apparent.

Include accessibility and inclusivity at the very start of planning.

Consider access and physical barriers and adapt – ie canal locks and boats.

Consider people on limited budgets, those with children and carers.

Gain accreditation and encourage others to do likewise.

Generate and support opportunities for volunteers from all backgrounds.



Table 3: Extending the season

Facilitated by Del Goddard

Vibrant Partnerships

Co-ordinate activity across the area to promote out-of-season activity and avoid duplication.

Ensure public bodies across the area support tourism growth in their policies and procedures.

Promote out-of-season activities during peak times ie season tickets, discount vouchers for future dates.

Generate a programme of seasonal festivals.

Create themed tours and use the historical strengths of the area / key dates in history.

Encourage and promote “weather-proof” attractions and activities.

Attract more conferences/corporate events.



Table 4: Building the skills

Facilitated by Jill Nathan

New City College

Need to increase customer service skills across the area.

Engage with local colleges to put more emphasis on in-bound and local tourism industry.

Deliver multi-skills for visitor economy – tourism, digital, marketing, business planning, HR etc.

Up -skill existing workers and re-skill those wishing to work closer to home.

Support T Qualifications and embrace the workplace opportunities.

Help for smaller businesses to understand and offer apprenticeships.

Make better use of local education facilities – workshops, residential courses during the summer etc.

Table 5: Building and marketing the brand

Facilitated by Quentin Buller
Epping Forest District Council

Identify a marketable “uniqueness” which is internationally recognised and valued.

Look at existing successful brands for guidelines and avoid clashing/duplication.

Suggested names – The Leys and Garden of London were liked.

Green Heart endorsed by group.

Green suggests both ecology and the natural landscape.

Heart suggests a friendly and caring place plus lively and passionate.

Use the shape of the area to conform to a heart.

Table 6: Sustainable transport

Facilitated by Dean Walton
Epping Ongar Heritage Railway

Improve transport between existing hubs and tourism destinations.

Create area travel app bringing all forms of transport, routes and live information, together.

Charging hubs for electric bicycles and wheelchairs as well as cars.

Create trails for walking/cycling/water-borne.

Car-free zones and “no cars for a day” initiatives.

Create “Lay-over” tourism packages for Stansted passengers.

Hop on – hop off tourism bus.

Table 7: Green Tourism

Facilitated by Tricia Moxey
CPRE Essex

Create a green tourism map of the area.

Gain green accreditation and encourage others to do likewise.

Green holidays – destinations, activities, food and accommodation.

Encourage walking and cycling holidays – trails and accommodation linking attractions.

Create a long distance circular trail – guided walks.

Green heritage – traditional crafts, trails, lifestyles/back to nature.

Promote natural habitat and wildlife.

Closing Remarks

Michael Regenhardt from Marriott Hotels thanked delegates for giving up their time to support the growth of the tourism and visitor economy. As a manager of hotels across two counties, he understood the importance of neighbours working collectively and was delighted to see so many people, representing such a diverse range of interests, working together and identifying joint aims. As a well-travelled German working for an American company in our corner of the UK, he knew the importance of developing a brand and the delight that visitors would express when they discovered the hidden gems of our area. He wished everyone well in their endeavours and once more confirmed his full support as we moved forward.





EPPING FOREST TOURISM CONFERENCE DECEMBER 2019
The following representatives attended or supported the event:

Delegate Name	Representing
Judith Adams	Epping Forest Heritage Trust
Salome Ahenkora	Chigwell Tours
Kevin Allen	Partners By Design
Julie Allen	Partners By Design
Dawn Atkinson	New City College - Epping Forest Campus
Jorge Barrios	BASOL
Cllr Richard Bassett	Epping Forest District Council
Sue Bateman	Waltham Abbey Tourist Centre
Cllr Nigel Bedford	Epping Forest District Council
Leah Bhopal	New City College - Epping Forest Campus
Mark Boyce	Dark Origins Ltd
Lee Bridgen	Hertford Regional College
Steve Brocklehurst	North Weald Flying Services Ltd
Quentin Buller	Epping Forest District Council
Simone Butler	New City College
Carol Byatt	Epping Chamber of Commerce
James Cartstairs	Epping Forest District Council Museum
Ian Chisholm	Norton Field Farm
Julie Chisholm	Norton Field Farm
Monika Chwiedz	Epping Forest District Council
Cheryl Cullen	Visit London Taxi Tours
Michael Danvers	Harlow College
Isabella Dreher	New City College - Epping Forest Campus
Jacqueline Egglestone	City of London
Dejante Loraine Douglas	New City College - Epping Forest Campus
Andrew Figgis	East Herts District Council
Del Goddard	Vibrant Partnerships
Jan Goodeve	East Herts District Council
Harley Gunner	New City College-Epping Forest Campus
Tricia Gurnett	Waltham Abbey Tourism Committee
Kofi Gyasi-Sarfo	Cool Touch Travel Consult
Lysandra Halmshaw	Epping Forest District Council
Kate Harding	Harlow Art Trust
Ray Harris	Gytha Publishing
Duncan Haslam	Epping Forest District Council
Alan Hauge	Chigwell Tours
Laurette Holmes	Global Radio
John Houston	Epping Forest District Council
Julie Houston	Harlow Council
Linda Howells	Uttlesford District Council
Simon Jackson	Uttlesford District Council
Caroline Jenkins	Vibrant Partnerships
Pesh Kapasiawala	YES Partnership
Shannon Kearney	New City College - Epping Forest Campus
Nickzad Keyvanfar	New City College - Epping Forest Campus
Arjun Kuhaendran	New City College - Epping Forest Campus
Jodie Law	Waltham Abbey Town Council
Madison Law	New City College - Epping Forest Campus
Cllr Alan Lion	Epping Forest District Council
Rachel Martin	New City College
Cllr Graham McAndrew	Herts County & East Herts District Councils
Melanie Miller	Borough of Broxbourne
Sam Millar	The UK Americana Bar Ltd
Stella Morris	The Royal Gunpowder Mills
Tricia Moxey	CPRE Essex
Shabiba Nalinya	New City College - Epping Forest Campus
Lyndsey Nassim	Gilwell Park - The Scouts Association
Jill Nathan	New City College
Tony O'Connor	Epping Forest District Museum
Samuel Ojerinola	Travel and Tourism Graduate
Cheryl Owen	Visit Essex
Ben Perkins	North Weald Flying Services Ltd
Keith Perkins	North Weald Flying Services Ltd
Matteo Pesci	Epping Forest District Council
Chloe Piper	New City College - Epping Forest Campus
Kevin Podger	North Weald Flying Services Ltd
John Price	John Price Photography Ltd
Marisa Sharkey	Hertford Regional College
Clive Simpson	Pixel Business Centre Ltd
Christine Taylor-Higgs	Rye House Kart Raceway
Lydia Tickner	The Scout Association
Paul Violet	Waltham Abbey Town Centre Partnership
Dean Walton	Epping Ongar Railway
Michael Warr	Essex & Herts Digital Innovation Zone



www.visiteppingforest.org