



**OPEN REPORT  
COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

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**Community and Environment Committee – 7 September 2023**

**VISIT PEAK DISTRICT, DERBYSHIRE AND DERBY: PARTNERSHIP  
AGREEMENT 2023-2026**

**Report of Director of Regeneration and Policy**

**Report Author and Contact Details**

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**Wards Affected**

District-wide

**Report Summary**

The report seeks renewal of the Partnership Agreement between the District Council and Visit Peak District, Derbyshire and Derby (the official Tourist Board for this area)

**Recommendations**

1. That the Partnership Agreement between Visit Peak District, Derbyshire and Derby and Derbyshire Dales District Council 2023-2026 be approved.
2. That the District Council takes a seat on the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Board when established.

**List of Appendices**

Appendix 1 Draft Partnership Agreement between Visit Peak District, Derbyshire and Derby and Derbyshire Dales District Council 2023-2026

**Background Papers**

Community and Environment Committee (26 June 2019) – Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire: Partnership Agreement 2019-2022

**Consideration of report by Council or other committee**

No

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from Press or Public**

No

# Visit Peak District, Derbyshire and Derby: Partnership Agreement 2023 – 2026

## 1. Background

- 1.1 [Visit Peak District, Derbyshire and Derby](#) (VPDDD) is the official Tourist Board for this area – the destination management organisation. It is a public-private partnership, and its role is to support and grow the visitor economy.
- 1.2 Annual expenditure for VPDDD varies but is approximately £750,000, of which some £168,500 is directly contributed by local authority partners. The largest district council funding contribution is from Derbyshire Dales District Council (£17,000 per year). This reflects the fact that the Derbyshire Dales district contains more visitor economy businesses and attractions than other districts. The Peak District National Park Authority formerly contributed £12,000 to VPDDD but ceased its funding some years ago.

*Local authority contributions to VPDDD 2023/24*

Derbyshire County Council	£100,000
Derbyshire Dales District Council	£17,000
Chesterfield Borough Council	£14,000
High Peak Borough Council	£12,000
Bolsover District Council	£10,500
North East Derbyshire District Council	£10,500
Amber Valley Borough Council	£4,500

Commercial income (memberships and advertising) accounts for some £230,000, with the remainder comprising one-off Visit England and other funding sources that VPDDD has been very successful in bidding for.

- 1.3 VPDDD was one of the first 15 destination management organisations to be awarded the status of Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) by the Government earlier this year. LVEP status has been awarded to some of the larger and more viable destination management organisations, and recognises VPDDD's approach to partnership working. As part of the LVEP agreement, joint working between the existing Visit Peak District and Derbyshire and the existing Visit Derby organisations is being formalised – hence both titles, along with VPDDD, are still currently in use.
- 1.4 In recent years, VPDDD has been instrumental in leading the establishment of the 'Inspired by the Peak District' marque, which partners jointly promote as a quality investment and retail brand. VPDDD was also a delivery partner in the District Council's post-COVID "Welcome Back" campaign. Looking ahead, VPDDD is a member of the Derbyshire Dales UK Shared Prosperity Fund Partnership.
- 1.5 The VPDDD Board comprises private sector industry representatives and local authority representatives. The District Council is represented on the Board of VPDDD by Councillor Lucy Peacock in 2023/24. Other local authorities

represented are Derbyshire County Council, High Peak Borough Council, Derby City Council, and Peak District National Park Authority.

- 1.6 The Board is chaired by Sir Richard Fitzherbert (Tissington Hall). Other private sector members include Chatsworth and the Heights of Abraham; the University of Derby is also represented. The accountable body for VPDDD is the East Midlands Chamber, whose Chief Executive sits on the VPDDD Board.
- 1.7 If the LVEP in time has a different Board structure, it is recommended that the District Council (as the district contains more visitor economy businesses and attractions than other districts) should have a seat on the LVEP Board too. This has already been indicated by the Leader and Chief Executive at a meeting with other councils.

## 2. Visitor economy

- 2.1 The visitor economy accounts for a smaller percentage of employment in the Derbyshire Dales than the manufacturing sector, but is nevertheless significant. Accommodation has 3.9% of employees in the district; and food and beverage services have 10.9%. By contrast, manufacturing has 15.6% and public administration accounts for 9.4% of Dales employees (Source: Office for National Statistics UK Business Register and Employment Survey – extracted from NOMIS 3rd June 2023).
- 2.2 Jobs in the visitor economy are often characterised by part-time working, low wages, and seasonal/casual conditions. It is therefore important to the economic health of the Derbyshire Dales to grow the value of the visitor economy, with a view to creating better jobs in the sector. To achieve this, a District Council aim has been to **encourage visitors to spend more when they come to the Derbyshire Dales**. Providing better visitor ‘experiences’ and working towards a higher-value visitor ‘offer’ help achieve this aim.
- 2.3 There are estimated to be some 5 million visitors to the Derbyshire Dales each year (Source: STEAM model). 85% of these are day visitors – people coming to the Dales for a few hours, mostly by car, and going home the same day. Day visitors contribute, relatively speaking, little to the local economy. By contrast, 15% of visitors to the Derbyshire Dales are staying visitors – people whose visits include an overnight stay(s) in the district. Staying visitors contribute more to the Dales economy, both in terms of spend per head and overall spending.
- 2.4 Higher skilled, better paid, higher quality jobs can come from the visitor economy, but for that to occur higher visitor spend must be generated. This in turn depends on staying visitors. Staying visitors spend on accommodation, food and drink, and multiple attractions. To generate more staying visitors, two things must come together: more, **better quality accommodation** (rural hotels); AND more, **better quality rural visitor attractions**. The Derbyshire Dales needs the local tourism industry to come together to create, market and sell experiences that bring these two together – e.g. **cycling weekends** based around quality local food and drink establishments; **walking holidays** using existing routes staying in accommodation that offers good food. The green agenda can be captured here through active travel, public transport and local

purchasing. The '**Inspired by the Peak District**' brand is helping local businesses develop a marketing edge based on their association with the Peak District National Park which is an iconic brand.

2.5 Given the small resource of the District Council, it cannot achieve the above on its own. Therefore it looks to VPDDD to take the lead in delivering many of the above priorities.

### **3. The District Council tourism resource**

3.1 During 2014, a fundamental review of the District Council's tourism service took into account the tightening budget position of the District Council. Whilst making savings it resolved not to cease the tourism service altogether. Instead, the service merged with Economic Development and focuses now on the value to be gained by improving the quality of tourism in the district.

3.2 The tourism resource at the District Council now principally comprises approximately:

- 0.5 FTE tourism officer capacity
- £5,000 p.a. net budget for tourism publications such as mini-guides
- £2,000 p.a. IT support for Visitor Information Points in the district
- £17,000 p.a. contribution passed directly to VPDDD

3.3 For the past decade, the District Council's contribution to VPDDD of £17,000 has remained constant. Given the slim resource available to the District Council, it is important that maximum value for money is secured from our VPDDD contribution. It is in that light that the following Partnership Agreement has been negotiated.

### **4. Partnership Agreement**

4.1 The first Partnership Agreement between the Council and VPDD was signed in 2019. This successor Agreement seeks to retain and build on good features from the first. However, it is acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the period of the initial agreement.

4.2 The draft Agreement (attached to this report at Appendix 1) describes common aims and objectives, as well as individual priorities for both the Council and VPDDD. Key aims include improving the quality of the visitor offer and marketing the destination. Objectives include:

- attracting higher spending visitors who are likely to buy local products
- encouraging visitors to spend more, by staying longer
- increasing the ratio of staying visitors versus day visitors
- improving the quality of tourism jobs.

4.3 Targets within the draft Agreement comprise generic actions that VPDDD will undertake, and specific activity of importance to the Derbyshire Dales. Some of the latter are highlighted in red in the draft Agreement, and include:

- Grow VPDDD membership numbers across the Derbyshire Dales by 15%: there are more than 1500 visitor economy businesses (accommodation, attractions, events, places to eat/drink) in the Derbyshire Dales, but currently the number of these that are members of VPDDD is in the region of 105.
- Carry out a quarterly “How’s business?” survey of visitor economy businesses, with questions measuring the number and value of overnight stays, increase/decrease in turnover, and increase/decrease in overseas visitors.
- Website satisfaction: % of Derbyshire Dales businesses who consider the VPDD website good or excellent.
- Numbers of social media posts featuring content from the Derbyshire Dales.
- Business support (workshops, webinars and peer to peer networking events): to engage a minimum 50 Derbyshire Dales businesses per year.

4.4 The draft Agreement confirms that Derbyshire Dales District Council will provide VPDDD with £17,000 in 2024/25. Subject to available resources and achievement of the Outputs specified in the Agreement, it would be the intention of the District Council to continue to contribute funding at this level in 2024/25 and 2025/26. Performance against the Agreement will be reviewed annually. Should resources not be available at that level, or should the outputs/outcomes not be achieved in full, then the Agreement states that the funding contribution from the District Council may be reduced.

## **5. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal**

5.1 It is recommended that the Partnership Agreement be approved.

5.2 An alternative option would be not to have a Partnership Agreement with VPDDD; that would mean uncertainty both for the Council and VPDDD as to future visitor economy activity, and is not recommended. Alternatively, the Partnership Agreement could be re-negotiated, but given the months taken to reach this draft the prospect of further delay for uncertain gain is not recommended.

5.3 A further option would be to withdraw from VPDDD and cease funding. This option could bring a financial saving to the Council. However, given the fact that the Derbyshire Dales contains more visitor economy businesses and attractions than other districts, and that the visitor economy accounts for 14.8% of employees in the Derbyshire Dales, withdrawal from the Local Visitor Economy Partnership is not recommended.

## **6. Consultation**

6.1 The District Council’s representative on the VPDDD Board, Councillor Lucy Peacock, has been consulted on this report. Her comments are:

“I support the objectives in the agreement, and particularly applaud the emphasis on creating higher value jobs, and lessening the environmental

impact of tourism. I think the key performance indicators are fair and reasonable.”

## **7. Timetable for Implementation**

- 7.1 The Partnership Agreement would come into effect when signed, and last until March 2026.

## **8. Policy Implications**

- 8.1 Section 2 of the report explains the links between the visitor economy and the evidenced economic development needs of the Derbyshire Dales. The Corporate Plan 2020-24 has a priority of ‘Prosperity – supporting better homes and jobs’, within which is a target area to “Support businesses to encourage productivity, growth, and higher wage jobs in rural and urban locations.” ‘Promoting the area’s walking, cycling and food & drink offer’ is a non-priority action in the current Economic Plan. The draft Partnership Agreement has been written in support of these policies.

- 8.2 The Economic Recovery Plan approved by the Council in 2020 stated that the visitor economy would not be a primary focus of the post-pandemic recovery, other than where higher value generating tourism can be stimulated. The rural economy position statement, endorsed by the Council at the same meeting, gave specific guidance as to how the visitor economy could be influenced to generate higher visitor spend. The approach taken in this report follows that lead and seeks, within the limited resources available, to stimulate higher-value generating tourism.

## **9. Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 The £17,000 contribution to Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire is incorporated in the approved 2023/24 budget. Its inclusion in the budget in future years would be subject to the annual review process incorporated in the draft Partnership Agreement. The financial risk of this report is therefore assessed as low.

## **10. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 As stated, this report seeks renewal of the Partnership Agreement between the District Council and Visit Peak District, Derbyshire and Derby.
- 10.2 There is a recommended decision that the Partnership Agreement between Visit Peak District, Derbyshire and Derby and Derbyshire Dales District Council 2023-2026 is approved.
- 10.3 The legal risk for the Council in taking the recommended decision has been assessed as low.

## **11. Equalities Implications**

- 11.1 A core objective of VPDDD as set out in the draft Partnership Agreement, is to “Make tourism inclusive and available for all”. The [visitpeakdistrict.com](https://www.visitpeakdistrict.com) website enables searching for accessible accommodation and other businesses by selecting requirements such as: Fully accessible disabled toilet, Changing places toilet, Designated disabled parking, Accessible equipment available for use or hire, Clear signage throughout venue, Audible alarm system, Visual alarm system, Hearing loop in key places, Wheelchair accessible, Braille or large print menu and information.
- 11.2 The annual VPDD tourism awards include an Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Award. This seeks to recognise tourism businesses that excel in providing an inclusive customer experience, particularly for those with accessibility requirements.

## **12. Climate Change and Biodiversity Implications**

- 12.1 A core aim of VPDDD as set out in the draft Partnership Agreement, is to reduce environmental impact. An objective is to reduce the impact of transport by providing visitors with better information on travel between attractions and major transport hubs, and to work towards zero carbon targets.
- 12.2 Specific targets in the draft Partnership Agreement include:
- Launch the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan 2023: develop sustainable tourism products in the Derbyshire Dales, support transport connectivity, and provide better information about bus routes and how to get here.
  - Work with a number of accommodation providers and attractions to promote the use of public transport and the wayfarer ticket
- 12.3 The [visitpeakdistrict.com](https://www.visitpeakdistrict.com) website enables searching for sustainable accommodation and other businesses by selecting requirements such as: Eco cleaning, Net Zero pledge, Plant-based menu options or vegetarian or vegan friendly options, Environmental certification/awards, Renewable energy, Local produce or homegrown food, Accessible by public transport, Electric vehicle charging, and Recycling on-site.
- 12.4 To promote biodiversity, it might be helpful if in future accommodation or visitor attractions were supported to make claims to be ‘pollinator friendly’ or ‘managing our grounds for nature’, and that where achieved these measures could also be searchable terms on the website.
- 12.5 The annual VPDD tourism awards include an Ethical, Responsible & Sustainable Tourism Award. This seeks to recognise tourism businesses from across the visitor economy who are truly committed to being sustainable, responsible and ethical in how they operate and interact with customers, the wider community and the environment.

## **11. Risk Management**

11.1 None directly arising from this report. The Accountable Body for VPDDD is the East Midlands Chamber.

### **Report Authorisation**

Approvals obtained from Statutory Officers:

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Paul Wilson	21/08/2023
Director of Resources/ S.151 Officer (or Financial Services Manager)	Karen Henriksen	24/08/2023
Monitoring Officer (or Legal Services Manager)	Kerry France	25/07/2023