

DESTINATION HARROGATE

Destination Harrogate celebrates boost to the visitor economy as it turns one

As Destination Harrogate celebrates its first birthday, the Destination Management Organisation is delighted to announce new figures that show visitors to the Harrogate district are making a greater impact on the local economy now than pre-pandemic.

According to the latest STEAM figures¹, visitors in 2022 were staying longer and spending more than in 2019 - contributing £637m to the local economy last year, compared with £606m three years previously.

Revenue generated by visits in 2022 was up by more than £30.5m on 2019, equating to a rise in economic impact of 5.1%. The annual target increase in economic impact from 2023-2025, set out in Harrogate district's Destination Management Plan (DMP)² launched in March 2022, was 4%.

The average length of stay for visitors to the district in 2022 increased from 2019 to 3.5 days, compared with 3.3 days three years previously. 2019 was in itself an exceptional year, with the UCI Championships taking place in Harrogate - leading to higher hotel occupancy rates in September than at any other point during the year.

The average length of stay for visitors to England in 2022 also rose, from 2.93 in 2019 to 3.3 days, putting Harrogate once again above the national average at 3.5 days.

Since its launch in March 2022, Destination Harrogate has delivered a range of activity to bring more visitors into the district, including the launch of a new Health and Wellbeing campaign - one of the key priorities of the DMP. Under the Visit Harrogate brand, the campaign draws on the Harrogate district's rich spa heritage, to showcase a first choice visitor destination for enjoying a short break that is good for you - targeting a higher spending audience and encouraging longer visits.

The DMO also launched the first Visit Harrogate Restaurant Week (set to return later this year) and together with partners, delivered a number of successful campaigns and events: Destination Christmas, including Harrogate Christmas Fayre; events on the Stray marking the Queen's Jubilee; the return of Harrogate Carnival; another successful Gardens campaign, with new visitor experiences at Harrogate Flower Show, including an outdoor cinema at the Autumn Flower Show at Newby Hall. Visit Harrogate also hosted a stand at the Great Yorkshire Show for the first time.

In summer 2022, Destination Harrogate was recognised for improving the district's offering as a tourism destination, winning the Tourism category at Harrogate's Business Excellence Awards. The DMO was also shortlisted in the Global Place Brand Awards, City Nation Place.

Speaking ahead of the DMO's Annual Review, **John McGivern, Destination Events Manager, Destination Harrogate said:** "This is fantastic news for our local businesses and residents and testament to the hard work of everyone in the DMO, and of our partners with whose support we are able to deliver these positive results.

"The fact that people are staying longer and spending more aligns directly with our objectives of a sustainable tourism model, attracting more revenue into the local economy, whilst minimising the impact on the environment.

"Together with our partners, with whom we share this achievement, we can celebrate the significant impact that our visitors are making on our local economy and can we look forward to further successes going forward."

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Cllr Stanley Lumley, Cabinet Member for culture, tourism and sport at Harrogate Borough Council, said: “This is excellent news and shows what a wonderful tourism offer we have in the Harrogate area of North Yorkshire, with a strong appeal to visitors that are keen to explore everything we have to offer here.

“Harrogate’s visitor economy is the largest driver of the local economy second only to the property sector, and its value cannot be underestimated. The work of Destination Harrogate in boosting the economic impact of visits to the area is to be applauded.

“With such a positive set of results we can look forward to a prosperous future for Harrogate as a major tourism destination within North Yorkshire.”

The announcement comes on the eve of English Tourism Week 2023 (17th – 26th March), which highlights the importance, value and vast contribution that the tourism sector makes to the UK economy - to stakeholders including Government, MPs and ministers.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. STEAM is a tourism economic impact modelling process that approaches the measurement of tourism from the bottom up through local supply-side data and tourism performance and visitor survey data. More information is available [here](#).
2. As part of its Destination Management Plan, Destination Harrogate aims to grow the visitor economy to £836.7 million by 2030. For more detail please see the Destination Management Plan [here](#).

About Destination Harrogate

Destination Harrogate is the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for Harrogate district, responsible for instigating and leading on the delivery of the Destination Management Plan for 2022 through to the end of 2025. In collaboration with its partners, the DMO showcases what’s wonderful, exciting and appealing about Harrogate district to attract more visitors, events and investment to the area, to create a strong local economy for residents and businesses.

The DMO incorporates Visit Harrogate, Events Harrogate and Culture Harrogate, working in partnership with Invest Harrogate, which is responsible for delivery of HBC’s inward investment plan to support economic growth in the district. The DMP supports the ambitions of the district Economic Growth Strategy (2017 – 2035), Local Plan (2014 – 2035), and 2024 Transformation Programme.