



Allerdale Borough Council A Strategy for Tourism 2005-2015

August 2005

Allerdale Borough Council

A Strategy for Tourism

2005-2015

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Allerdale Borough Council's Vision is to make Allerdale a great place to live, work and visit.

A great place to live means:

- Everyone has access to the services they need;
- Everyone can find a home that suits them;
- Older people feel safe and continue to add value to the community;
- Young people are having fun and believe they can build a future in the area.

A great place to work means:

- All local communities share in prosperity that is sustainable in the long term;
- Skilled and talented people remain in the area to build their careers;
- There is good quality local provision for gaining learning and skills.

A great place to visit means:

- Visitors are delighted to find the area clean and green, peaceful and welcoming;
- Visitors are invited to join with local people in enjoying a wide range of cultural activities, including sport, music, drama, food and drink, highlighted through a popular programme of festivals.

- 1.2 Tourism is an extremely complex activity that affects most of the district. It is hugely important for local prosperity, as it brings well over £195 million into the local economy each year and provides up to 4000 local jobs.

- 1.3 Although not a statutory function that the Council has to deliver, tourism is seen by the Council to be an increasingly important component of Allerdale's economy. A well-managed and prosperous tourism industry will be a major catalyst for revitalising the borough, making it a better place to live, work and visit.

- 1.4 This document summarises the themes, policies and actions that Allerdale Borough Council will adopt with regard to the development of tourism in the borough over the next 10 years.

2. Why does the Allerdale Borough Council need a tourism strategy for the borough?

- 2.1 As the provider of essential public facilities, statutory policy and infrastructure such as planning, conservation, environmental protection and management, licensing and parking, as well as the non-statutory provision of leisure and recreational facilities, the Council's role impacts upon the quality of the tourism product.

- 2.2 Allerdale Borough Council fully supports the development and management of tourism in the borough, not least because of the improved quality of life it affords local residents. The Council and partners will ensure that all sections of the community are able to benefit directly or indirectly from opportunities that may be

created.

- 2.3 Allerdale Borough Council considers its role in tourism development to be:
- i) an enabler of development and;
 - ii) providing leadership for partners in terms of implementing and delivering projects.
- Although the quality of the visitor experience is largely governed at a local level, ultimately, the quality of the tourism product and of tourism services is dependent on the actions of a range of partners and stakeholders.
- 2.4 Development of the Tourism Strategy is timely because the borough faces a period of great change and opportunity. Developments in Allerdale, including Derwent Forest, the Derwent Valley scheme, Market Towns Initiatives and the redevelopment of Workington Town Centre, have raised expectations and created optimism. The next 10 years are crucial if these achievements are to be built upon.
- 2.5 The Tourism Strategy is intended to inform the public of our policy on tourism and aimed at guiding the actions of the Council and its officers. It is also targeted at all parties who have a stake in the future of the tourism economy in Allerdale and in developing Allerdale as a visitor destination. This includes Councillors as elected representatives, Council departments, tourism partnerships and organisations, regional strategic and funding agencies, businesses, residents and the visitor. The extent to which this is effective will depend on the level of co-operation received from the stakeholders involved. This is why the Council involved stakeholders from the start of the strategy development process.
- 2.6 An integrated approach with partners to tourism development is required to achieve:
- cohesive promotional activity
 - a consistent message to partners as to Allerdale Borough Council's role in promoting and developing tourism;
 - professional, effective and value for money implementation
 - better co-ordinated and informed private sector.
- 2.7 The Strategy must strengthen partnerships that will ensure a sustainable future for all stakeholders - residents, businesses and visitors alike.

3. Volume and value of tourism in Allerdale

3.1 Key tourism facts and figures:

- Tourism related expenditure in Allerdale is worth over £195 million to the local economy per annum.* This represents 20% of Cumbria's tourism revenue.
- The tourism sector directly supports over 4000 jobs locally with a further 1000 employed indirectly.*
- Tourism in Allerdale currently supports around 2.5 million visitors per year.*
- Allerdale attracts a predominantly day visitor market – approximately 59% of all tourists who visited in 2002 were day visitors.*
- Tourism is a vital sector in the local economy and a large employer in the borough. The value of tourism to Allerdale business is significant. Allerdale

Borough Council spent over £230,000 directly on tourism services in the borough in 2002/3. Of this figure £102,250 was spent on the staffing and running of the Council's Tourist Information Centres, Maritime Museum and contribution towards the Western Lake District Visitor Centre, £66,000 was spent on marketing and tourism development activities and the rest on support costs. This equates to £2.46 per resident per annum spent on tourism development or 9p per visitor.**

**Based on Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) figures 2002*

***Based on budgets 2002/03*

- 3.2 Details of visitor spend, numbers of visitors and tourist days from 1999-2002 for the borough of Allerdale are summarised below. Despite Foot & Mouth Disease (FMD) and the twin towers attack on 11th September 2001 (9/11), visitor figures have recovered to above the 1999 level, with a 12.5% increase in visitor spend over this period.

Allerdale borough visitor figures and spend:

	1999	2000	2001	2002	% +/- between 1999 and 2002
(1) Number of visitors per annum (000's)	2,468	2,398	2,357	2,587	4.8
(2) Number of tourist days per annum (000's)	5,565	5,540	5,027	5,688	2.2
(3) Total visitor spend per annum (000's)	174,056	174,363	159,437	195,819	12.5
(4) Spend per head *	£70.53	£72.71	£67.64	£75.69	7.3

*Total visitor spend per annum (3) / Number of visitors per annum (1)

Source – Allerdale Borough STEAM Reports 1999–2002

- 3.3 The tourism sector covers a wide range of jobs including transport and travel, hospitality, retail, accommodation, visitor attractions and recreation. Tourism in Allerdale impacts on a range of employment sectors contributing towards 4,985 jobs in the borough in 2002. Details of direct and indirect employment from 1999-2002 for the borough of Allerdale are summarised below.

<i>Employment in Allerdale (FTEs):</i>					
	1999	2000	2001	2002	% +/- between 1999 and 2002
(1) Direct employment	4,637	4,566	3,731	4,080	-12.0
(2) Indirect employment	859	872	763	905	5.4
(3) Total employment	5,496	5,439	4,494	4,985	-9.3
(4) Total number of people aged 16-74 were employed in Allerdale per 2001 census	40,812	40,812	40,812	40,812	N/a
(5) Tourism supported jobs as a percentage of those employed in Allerdale (4) / (5) x 100%	13.5%	13.3%	11.0%	12.2%	1.3%

Source – Allerdale Borough STEAM Reports 1999–2002

- 3.4 Allerdale has an average of 24,000 serviced and non-serviced bedspaces available per annum, the vast majority of these (over 17,000) being non-serviced bed stock. This includes small to medium hotels, a range of Bed & Breakfast (B&B) stock, a variety of self-catering accommodation and caravan parks.
- 3.5 Although Allerdale has five Tourist Information Centres, only three, in Maryport, Silloth and Workington, are managed by the Council. Cockermouth Tourist Information Centre is run by Cockermouth Town Council and Keswick's Information Centre is operated by the Lake District National Park Authority. However Allerdale Council is represented on the Joint Management Advisory Group for the Keswick centre which determines and monitors the objectives for the Information Centre and Moot Hall. Allerdale Borough Council owns the Moot Hall which houses the Information Centre.
- 3.6 While there has been an increase in visitor numbers and tourism spend within Allerdale, visitors from the Council-run Information Centres are variable:

Tourist Information Centre visitor figures 2001-2003:

	2001	2002	2003	% +/- between 2001 and 2003
Maryport Tourist Information Centre	17,216	12,450	13,150	-23.6
Silloth Tourist Information Centre	15,951	15,359	14,997	- 6.0
Workington Tourist Information Centre	18,555	17,680	20,675	11.4
Keswick Information Centre	382,429	413,151	403,545	5.5
Cockermouth Tourist Information Centre	36,552	34,089	33,564	-8.2
Total	51,722	45,489	48,822	- 5.6

Sources – Allerdale Borough Council, Keswick Tourism Association, Cockermouth Town Council

- 3.7 The net cost, cost per visitor and spend per visitor at each of the Council-run Tourist Information Centres are shown below. However the value of Tourist Information Centres (TICs) to the Allerdale economy, per Cumbria Tourist Board, is £8 million. The vast majority of TICs in the country run at a loss and need to be funded by operators. However there is no doubt that visitors value the services they provide and there is generally high expectation amongst visitors that tourist destinations have well signposted and prominently located TICs.

Tourist Information Centre cost analysis 2002/3:

	Net cost £	Cost per visitor £	Spend per visitor £
Maryport Tourist Information Centre	46,696	3.80	0.75
Silloth Tourist Information Centre	26,391	1.73	0.50
Workington Tourist Information Centre	27,700	1.63	0.27

Sources – Allerdale Borough Council

3.8 At present the Council is involved in the following tourism activities:

- Supporting events, such as the World Mountain Running Championships in Keswick. Events previously supported by the Council include Keswick Jazz Festival and Maryport Blues Festival, which have become an important part of the borough's events programme.
- Investing in partnership undertakings: Moot Hall (which houses Keswick Tourist Information Centre), Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership and Western Lake District Tourism Partnership
- Identifying and developing major tourism products: Derwent Forest; Derwent Valley project, which will deliver new leisure and recreation facilities; re-development of Workington town centre with increased retail offer; development of the Port of Workington, with particular reference to cruise terminal option; and Maryport harbourside visitor attraction
- Ensuring standards are met in hotels, restaurants, etc., though environmental health services
- Working in partnership to maintain services at museums in Maryport, Keswick and Workington, and leisure centres at Cockermouth, Keswick and Workington, and in relation to litter, waste management and the environment
- Delivery of visitor services at Tourist Information Centres in Workington, Maryport and Silloth and maintenance of Tourist Information Points throughout Allerdale
- Contribute towards the distribution, by the fulfilment house, of the Western Lake District Holiday Guide
- Promotion of the area through the media, Allerdale Outlook magazine and the Council's website.

4. Consultation and research

4.1 Two consultation sessions with stakeholders were held in October and December 2004. The sessions were attended by approximately 50 people, who contributed to discussions about two questions:

- What aspects of tourism are important to you?
- How should the Council best get involved?

4.2 The consultation also asked for resident's views to these questions through the Winter edition of the Council magazine "Allerdale Outlook", which is distributed to all residential households in Allerdale.

4.3 A survey was sent to 300 tourism-related businesses in Allerdale in January 2005. The survey asked recipients to identify the priorities, to the tourism industry, of areas where the Council could get involved.

4.4 The consultation identified common themes in which stakeholders considered important for the Council to be involved. These are:

- basic infrastructure, such as car parks, toilets and signage;
- branding and marketing;
- lobbying to attract investment and raise the profile of the area;

- strategic project development, such as the development of Derwent Forest as a tourism facility;
- an overall high-quality tourism experience;
- a single point of contact for the industry at Allerdale Borough Council;
- and the provision of Tourist Information Centres.

4.5 A SWOT analysis was undertaken to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the key issues that the consultation identified:

Strengths

Product:

- Clean, tidy environment
- Areas of natural beauty
- Popular destinations within the district (Lake District National Park, Keswick, Solway Firth Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
- Developing brand of Western Lakes
- Good range of outdoor activities
- Good indoor attractions (although localised in certain towns/areas)
- Improving cultural offer – festivals, well respected theatre
- Good reputation with certain niche groups e.g. bird watchers

Weaknesses

Strategy:

- Need for long term objectives and identified strategic aims
- Need for clear priorities
- Lack of research and information on tourism in Allerdale

Infrastructure:

- Car parking – negative perception of Council's intentions
- Current car parking arrangements (car parks and on street) seen by operators as discouraging visitors
- Limited road and rail links
- Very limited public transport (buses, trains) – difficulty of getting around the borough without a car
- Signage – out of date signs, signs in wrong location, too many signs

Marketing:

- TICS – complicated operations (3 different operators in Allerdale)
- Perception that there is not adequate information on internet – need more effective use of links

Product:

- Lack of facilities in some areas – speciality shops, cafes, etc.
- Lack of accommodation capacity away from the established tourism centres and for specific groups such as coach parties (borough-wide)
- Some poor quality accommodation

Image:

- Weather can be a negative
- Less favourable image of areas outside LDNP (coast, North Allerdale)
- Poor image presented in certain towns – boarded up shops etc.
- Environment – dog fouling

Skills:

- Skills shortage – perception of industry as low paid etc.
- Lack of tourism staff/co-ordinator within Council
- Lack of customer service training – shops, cafes, etc.

Opportunities

Infrastructure:

- Surplus income generated from car parking can continue to be used to contribute towards non-statutory services
- Make car parking more customer friendly with training for attendants, improved signage (electronic signage? etc.)
- Introduce more flexible parking arrangements for large events/festivals (e.g. weekend parking permit)
- Improved signage in car parks giving car park options and directions to other car parks
- Park and ride schemes
- Carlisle airport
- Local Development Framework – opportunities to address tourism infrastructure
- University of Cumbria – providing skilled workers

Image:

- Improvements to the environment – flag awards (coastal, parks and open spaces)

Product:

- Developing festivals and events (large scale)
- Strategic Project Development: Workington Town Centre, Hadrian's Wall developments, Maryport (harbourside Heritage Centre, Senhouse Museum), Derwent Forest, Derwent Valley
- Creating cycling events to cater for the developing cycling market

Promotion:

- Changing the TIC structure
- Using technology – information points/ information provision
- CTB role as Destination Manager

Partnerships:

- Work with other bodies on existing and new schemes e.g. Port of Workington, Carlisle airport
- Improving relations with partner organisations

- Working with smaller community groups on marketing (where CTB not interested)
- Work with key partners on marketing and raising awareness (LDNPA, CTB, KTA, WLDTP, Hadrian's Wall, Solway Coast AONB Joint Advisory Committee)

Threats

Expectations:

- General trend of rising expectations, need to create products that can meet those

Economy:

- Impact of closure of Sellafield – possible loss of population and therefore workforce

Policy changes:

- Policy and structure changes (national, regional and local)
- Changes to licensing laws for festivals and events (new events for over 6000 people may have to face fees)

Budgetary constraints:

- Reliance on funding from other bodies
- Limited resources within the Council

Key features of the SWOT analysis can be identified as strengths to be built upon, weaknesses to be addressed and opportunities to be taken within this Strategy, including:

- Maintaining a clean and tidy environment;
- Building upon the popularity of destinations such as Keswick and the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Establishing objectives for the development of tourism in Allerdale (addressed by this Strategy);
- Building knowledge and understanding through research and evaluation;
- Actively engaging with partners to investigate ways to address negative perceptions and inadequate facilities and services;
- Introducing customer-friendly practices;
- Developing festivals and events;
- Developing the cycling market;
- Ensuring large projects are developed to their full potential – Workington Town centre, Hadrian's Wall, Maryport, Derwent Forest, Derwent Valley, Port of Workington;
- Working with partners, agencies and community groups to promote the area.

These key features and others are addressed in the objectives and actions of this Strategy (section 6).

- 4.6 A Best Value Inspection report on the Council's Tourism service in January 2002 recommended:

1. Further develop the tourism product to meet customer needs and expectations by:
 - developing a Destination Management System (DMS) in order to understand the customer base and target appropriate customers in a cost effective way (there is now a county-wide DMS system which Allerdale contributes towards and which is used by Cumbria Tourist Board and the Western Lake District Tourism Partnership to target potential visitors);
 - ensuring that the West Cumbria Tourism Partnership Marketing Strategy is underpinned by appropriate product development activity.
2. Improve service delivery by developing a tourism strategy to include:
 - links to national and regional objectives/priorities;
 - clarify the roles of partners at national/regional/local levels;
 - methods of and responsibilities for service delivery;
 - short, medium and long term priorities.
3. Review existing and planned partnerships to ensure a more rationalised and co-ordinated approach and to direct and focus resources to key priorities and to meet demand.
4. Strengthen links with local and regional transport operators and agencies to assist with the development of tourism in the area.
5. Develop a Tourist Information centre/Tourist Information Point Strategy for all Tourist Information Centres and Tourist Information Points within Allerdale that links to national, regional and county priorities, including:
 - a review of premises/locations;
 - accessibilitiy issues;
 - customer service standards;
 - promotion and marketing of the services;
 - product sales and purchasing.
 (These issues have recently been addresses by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its review of the Council's Tourist Information Centres.)
6. Further develop performance management to achieve upper quartile performance by:
 - Further benchmarking with Coastal 2 and other groupings;
 - Establishing local performance indicators and measurable targets.

5. Strategic influences

- 5.1 This Strategy is designed to focus key public and private sector agencies responsible for tourism delivery in the borough to ensure an integrated approach in securing a sustainable tourism economy.
- 5.2 Key to the focus of this Strategy is Allerdale Borough Council's vision of making Allerdale a great place to live, work and visit.

5.3 In order to ensure an integrated approach number of local and regional strategies must be considered. These are summarised below:

- *The Strategy for Tourism in England's North West* details the North West Regional Development Agency's aim to create the best tourism offer in Britain by focusing on nine core programmes:
 - i) The 'Star Brand' Approach: to attract visitors to the region using 'attack brands' then using slipstream brands such as the Western Lake District to disperse visitors around the region.
 - ii) Winning Themes: Themes focus on: the countryside; culture; attractive and safe night environments; industrial heritage; sporting excellence; lakes, rivers, canals and coast; food; family fun; and shopping.
 - iii) Make it Easy: This programme is primarily about tourism infrastructure. It covers quality information, transport infrastructure, signage and relationship marketing systems.
 - iv) Celebrating and Growing Excellence: to encourage more professionalism and raise skills standards. The focus will be on achieving real excellence, high quality and value.
 - v) A Region for Business: to ensure that each part of the region has an appropriate infrastructure to attract business tourism.
 - vi) Excellent Events: developing existing events and securing new events of the highest quality.
 - vii) Regional Gems: to enhance the region's existing assets that have potential to attract visitors. This includes towns and villages.
 - viii) Intelligence Led: this programme stresses the importance of good information to understand the value of tourism, plan future development and improve business practices.
 - ix) Signature Projects: initiatives that will bring major change for the region. These include the Lake District as one of the strongest destinations in the country, Hadrian's Wall and the northern European cruise market, of which the Lake District is envisaged to be on the key cruise destinations.
- Cumbria Tourist Board's *Destination Management Plan 2005-06* is currently being drafted. It details the plans of Cumbria Tourist Board, and of agencies and partners, in delivering a high-quality visitor experience. The Tourism Vision for Cumbria - the Lake District is:

"By 2015 the Lake District will have an unrivalled reputation for its high-quality landscape, accommodation, attractions, public realm, heritage and cultural offer, excellent customer care and a year-round programme of activities and events centred on the area's unique culture. The benefits of tourism generated by the Lake District brand will have cascaded out to embrace other parts of the County. Hadrian's wall will have attained the status of "attack brand", and there will be a well presented range of thematic brands supporting tourism throughout Cumbria."

An “attack brand” tends to be a primary destination brand that is used outside the region to attract visitors as it is already branded to a degree in the minds of consumers. Visitors are then dispersed to other parts of the region, using less well-known products and areas; the “slipstream” brands. “Slipstream” brands are locations that receive a different level of marketing, typically aimed at potential visitors already in or near the region.

The Tourism Vision will be achieved through eight objectives:

1. *Marketing and promotion* – Maintain the vigorous marketing and promotion of Cumbria – The Lake District as a premier destination for visitors through joint activity with public and private sector partners, using an integrated approach and electronic media. Campaigns will address the needs of both attack brand and slipstream brand areas.
2. *Information* – Ensure that visitors and the industry have easy access to the information they require in whichever form they require it.
3. *World-class product development and investment* – Develop the tourism product in Cumbria to meet the needs and expectations of visitors and the community whilst conserving and enhancing the environment on which tourism depends.
4. *Infrastructure* – Develop infrastructure and transport networks to improve visitors’ experiences of the region and to bring added community and environmental benefits.
5. *Performance of tourism businesses* – Enhance the quality, performance, sustainable practices and profitability of tourism businesses in Cumbria.
6. *Potential of people who work in tourism* – Improve the skills and capability of industry staff and create a more stable, attractive and rewarding career for the workforce.
7. *Representation of visitors and the industry* – Understand the needs of visitors, tourism businesses and employees in Cumbria’s tourism and hospitality industry, and to represent their interests whenever necessary.
8. *Measurement and research* – Provide the evidence required to produce an accurate evaluation of tourism across Cumbria and ensure informed decision making.

The Plan specifically notes public realm issues that were also highlighted through our own consultation process:

- “By far the most significant issue of concern, to both visitors and tourism operators alike is parking – problems finding parking and the cost of doing so.”
- “Lack of public conveniences was the next most significant complaint from visitors.”
- “There is a constant need to keep ahead of the game in what is an increasingly competitive field with a response to a deteriorating public realm; incentives to raise the quality of accommodation and customer service; improvements to the information services and the ease of booking holidays and activities from a distance; upgrading public transport and cycle tourism routes and facilities; and raising visitor spending throughout their stay in Cumbria.”

“Dramatic improvement in many aspects of the public realm e.g. visitor friendly urban design, transport infrastructure and other visitor facilities” is cited as being an investment priority to achieving market growth.

- *Western Lake District Tourism Partnership Marketing Strategy* aims to raise the profile of the Western Lake District as a destination and to increase the economic benefits accrued from tourism. The partnership is public/private sector tourism marketing consortium which covers both the boroughs of Allerdale and Copeland and concentrates its activities on market focus, target market segments, niche marketing and internal marketing.
- *The Cultural Strategy* for Allerdale refers to the opportunities surrounding new and proposed developments, such as Derwent Forest, visitor attraction developments at Maryport and cruise ship berthing facility at the Port of Workington. It also highlights the growth of heritage tourism: “New ways of using Allerdale’s heritage and presenting it as a tourism resource are already being researched – that process should be further explored and developed.”

The Strategy mentions the development of outdoor and activity holidays in the region, including walking, cycling, water sports and bird-watching, and recognises that developments in this area often require cross-sector discussions. In including Business Tourism in the Cultural Strategy, it is recognised that there are infrastructure and investment issues to address.

- *The Allerdale Local Plan* is the borough’s key statutory planning framework and all tourism and transport related developments will be influenced by this. The Plan recognises that some parts of the area are better able to absorb visitors than others and that this needs to be recognised in the land use planning system.
- *Allerdale’s Regeneration Strategy* is at present being drafted. It makes reference to the following as key employment projects which all contribute to the tourism

product in Allerdale:

- The redevelopment of Workington town centre
 - Derwent Valley development
 - Derwent Forest
 - Market Towns Initiative programmes operating in North Allerdale, Cockermouth and Keswick. These programmes include facelift schemes, tourism projects, a local produce market, streetscape refurbishment and a Viking tourist attraction.
- West Lakes Renaissance *Business Plan* and *Investment Plan* make reference to “developing the Furness and West Coast tourism and cultural offer” and to “developing the coastal infrastructure to enhance the tourism offer and attract inward investment”. Priorities identified in the plans include Derwent Forest, West Allerdale Regeneration programme, Harrington harbour, the Port of Workington, Maryport Harbour Bridges and improvements to the Senhouse Dock Access Road.
 - Rural Regeneration Cumbria (RRC) has a tourism development role and in its strategy, *Next Steps*, one of their eight strategic objectives is to “renew and strengthen sustainable recreation and tourism”. Under this objective RRC has several categories, including improving visitor facilities, visitor transport infrastructure such as an integrated walking and cycling network, marketing and promotion programmes and ICT developments.
 - *The Local Transport Plan* is critical in terms of visitor movement in and around the borough. The Local Transport Plan is the statutory planning document that sets out the County Council's vision, strategy and policies for transport. Through substantial work by consultees and staff, the second Local Transport Plan is currently being prepared and will cover the period April 2006 to March 2012. It will be submitted to the Department for Transport by 31 July 2005.
 - *A Cycle Tourism Strategy for Cumbria* examines the case for cycle tourism in Cumbria and sets out the vision for cycle tourism in Cumbria. The Strategy recognises the environmental, economic, health, social and cultural benefits that the development of cycle tourism can bring. It notes that the total spend of touring cyclists, staying visitors who cycle and day visitors who cycle in Allerdale in 2002 was nearly £5.5 million. The Strategy states the need for the development of cycle tourism hubs, development of cycling routes and information and the need to raise the profile of cycling in Cumbria.
 - *Review of Tourist Information Centres* by Allerdale's Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee defines the function of a Tourist Information Centre and assessed Allerdale's Centres with regard to location, staffing, usage and product information.
 - Keswick Tourism Association Ltd in its *Assessment of the role, effectiveness and future of an established voluntary organisation within the context of the regional*

tourism industry in the Lake District and Cumbria refers to the company's commitment to publicising the Keswick and North Lakes area, supporting its membership and local organisations and assisting visitors.

- The vision of *West Cumbria Live*, the West Cumbria Community Strategy is “A community which is innovative and sustainable, and offers all its people, as individuals and in communities, a quality of life which enables them to play a full part in our society, through their work, their leisure, and their social networks.” Whilst the Community Strategy is still to be fully developed, its objectives are based on local issues and priorities and several of them refer to tourism in West Cumbria.
- The *Solway Coast AONB Management Plan* recognises the importance of sustainable tourism to the rural economy. The tourism and recreation objectives for the Solway Coast AONB are:
 1. To facilitate appropriate levels and types of recreation and sustainable tourism which are compatible with AONB landscapes;
 2. To create a sustainable tourism brand for the AONB and to promote the AONB through sustainable tourism marketing strategies.

Solutions to these objectives include research to identify the types of visitor to the AONB, measuring the impact of tourism, developing recreational opportunities, promoting awareness of the area, developing a sustainable tourism brand, promoting the Solway Greens Awards Scheme, enhancing information provision and supporting infrastructure development for walking and cycling.

- 5.4 The table below aims to identify how the strategic influences ‘fit’ with the identified priorities for the development of tourism in Allerdale:

	Basic infrastructure / public realm	Branding and marketing	Attracting investment and raising profile	Develop strategic projects	Quality in tourism	Council contact for tourism trade	Provision of TICs / public information
The Strategy for Tourism in England's North West	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Destination Management Plan 2005-06	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western Lake District Tourism Partnership Marketing Strategy		✓	✓		✓		✓
The Cultural Strategy	✓		✓	✓			
The Allerdale Local Plan	✓			✓			
Regeneration Strategy	✓		✓	✓			
West Lakes Renaissance Business Plan and Investment Plan	✓		✓	✓			
Next Steps		✓	✓	✓			
Local Transport Plan	✓						
Cycle Tourism Strategy	✓	✓					✓
Review of Tourist Information Centres							✓
Keswick Tourism Association's Assessment...		✓	✓		✓		✓
West Cumbria Live	✓	✓	✓				
Solway Coast AONB Management Plan	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓

6. Strategic aims

6.1 With the priorities identified, it is important to translate these into strategic aims within the context of Allerdale Borough Council's objectives.

Allerdale Borough Council's Vision is to make Allerdale a great place to live, work and visit. This Strategy can best contribute towards delivery of that vision by focussing chiefly on helping to develop the tourism experience which visitors and local people alike can enjoy.

This means that the Council should take a primary role in ensuring that services are delivered effectively and that the area is clean and welcoming. Furthermore, it means that the Council should play a leading role in developing facilities that local people and visitors can enjoy.

It also means that direct involvement in marketing the area should be a secondary priority, delivered in close co-operation with existing partners, such as Cumbria Tourist Board, the Western Lake District Tourism Partnership, Keswick Tourism Association and the Hadrian's Wall Partnership, and working within the Northwest Regional Development Agency's Tourism Strategy framework.

6.2 How the priorities translate into aims:

Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic infrastructure; • the public realm; • a Council contact who can advise and on Council activities and procedures; • Council-owned Tourist Information Centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lobbying to attract investment and raise the profile of the area; • strategic project development; • the overall high-quality tourism experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • branding and marketing the area, without duplication of resources.
Why?	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>These issues can be addressed directly by the Council as it has some responsibility for these services.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>These issues are all about developing a high quality tourism experience.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>This issue is about branding and marketing the area, to visitors and residents, through effective partnerships.</p>
Aim:	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Aim 1 - To provide a friendly and welcoming first impression for visitors.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Aim 2 - To develop a high quality tourism experience for the benefit and enjoyment of both visitors and residents.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Aim 3 - To support the growth of tourism in Allerdale by working together to increase marketing impact.</p>

6.3 **Aim 1 – To provide a friendly and welcoming first impression for visitors**

Objective 1

To ensure that public realm services are 'welcoming' to meet the needs and expectations of visitors and the community, whilst enhancing the quality of the local environment.

Actions:

- a) An audit of the current number and standard of facilities for parking and public conveniences will be undertaken with a view to making 'customer-friendly' improvements.
- b) Investigate pilot scheme regarding improved signage in car parks.
- c) Maintain high user satisfaction levels in relation to council services such as litter, waste management and the environment through the Allerdale Environmental Partnership.
- d) Commit to environmental sustainability by assisting with and adopting local environmental programmes, such as competing in Cumbria in Bloom and the AONB team operating the Solway Green Awards.

Objective 2

To aim for excellence in the provision of information for visitors and residents through the Council's Tourist Information Centres and other appropriate access points.

Actions:

- a) Audit the existing information provision at key tourist access points, such as railways, bus stations, car parks and lay-byes.
- b) Maintain and update information for Tourist Information Points throughout Allerdale annually.
- c) Develop a TIC/TIP strategy to determine the best use of resources to promote the role and benefits of TICs to both visitors and residents.

Objective 3

Along with a range of partners, to investigate ways in which services are delivered to a high quality in all Tourist Information Centres in Allerdale.

Actions:

- a) Allerdale Borough Council will meet regularly with partners to discuss issues that impact upon the effectiveness of all the Tourist Information Centres in Allerdale and together investigate ways of continuously improving the Centres' services.

Objective 4

To ensure that visitors and residents have easy access to the information and services they require.

Actions:

- a) Develop forums, both within the Council and within the local tourism sector, for the co-ordination and programming of issues that may impact upon the industry in Allerdale.
- b) Promote a single contact within the Council, for marketing support and advice about Council procedures and activities, for tourism businesses within the borough.
- c) Allerdale Borough Council will work with Cumbria County Council and local transport groups to investigate ways in which public transport can be developed to ensure continued sustainable development.

Outcomes of aim 1

- Instills civic pride.
- Improves satisfaction for locals and visitors
- Upgrades quality of visit
- Encourages repeat visits by tourists
- Enhances the environment

6.4 **Aim 2 – To develop a high quality tourism experience for the benefit and enjoyment of both visitors and residents**

Objective 5

To lobby for, support and assist in attracting investment for, and the development of, new top-class tourism and leisure facilities, where these offer potential to attract additional visitors.

Actions:

- a) Deliver, along with partners, Derwent Forest, a leisure and tourism scheme.
- b) Deliver, along with partners, Derwent Valley, a leisure and recreation scheme.
- c) Deliver, with others, the redevelopment of Workington Town Centre by December 2006.
- d) Deliver, through West Allerdale Regeneration and with others, the development of Maryport Harbourside visitor attraction.
- e) Deliver, with others, the Derwentwater Foreshore project in Keswick.
- f) Contribute to the ongoing development strategy for Port of Workington, with particular reference to the cruise terminal option.
- g) Work with partners to explore options for the major upgrading of Senhouse Roman Museum in Maryport.
- h) Work with partners to explore options for the major upgrading of Workington Hall.
- i) Disseminate accurate tourism information to potential investors and developers of new and existing facilities and services.
- j) Investigate development opportunities for activity tourism such as walking and cycling.
- k) Support Market Town Initiatives to develop and deliver social economic regeneration projects in Allerdale.
- l) Support North Allerdale Partnership in delivering the Aspatria Viking Project.

Objective 6

To support the development of a year-round programme of events and festivals.

Actions:

- a) Carry out an audit of existing events and event organisers in and update annually to provide an accurate local events database and calendar.
- b) Support, develop and promote new events and festivals, that have potential to raise the profile of the area, so that they become a sustainable part of the year-round programme of events.

Objective 7

To encourage improvements to the quality of accommodation, attractions and visitor services.

Actions:

- a) The Council will work with partners to encourage uptake of quality initiatives, such as the national harmonised accommodation quality assurance schemes, Welcome Host accreditation and Cumbria Tourist Board's 'Better than the Best' scheme.
- b) Provide new and existing accommodation providers with information and advice to improve their quality standards as defined by the national quality assurance schemes.
- c) Ensure Council-owned theatres, galleries, museums, leisure centres and open spaces provide a quality experience for local residents and visitors.
- d) Ensure standards are met in hotels, restaurants, etc., through environmental health services.
- e) Forge links with further and high education establishments to develop skills in tourism development.
- f) Encourage quality and variety in local markets.

Outcomes of aim 2

- A growing and prosperous economy.
- A vibrant Allerdale events scene which attracts visitors from both Allerdale and across the UK.
- Repeat visits
- Longer stays
- Attraction of high value visitors
- High quality experience

6.5 Aim 3 – To support the growth of tourism in Allerdale by working together to increase marketing impact

Objective 8

To establish accurate local tourism statistics in order to monitor the performance of the area and to analyse trends, forecast and plan for development and to make the best use of resources.

Actions:

- a) Contribute towards STEAM surveys to establish visitor behaviour, length of stay and expenditure.
- b) Carry out research to benchmark the number of visitors currently attending events in Allerdale.
- c) Conduct ongoing customer surveys in Council-run Tourist Information Centres and tourism businesses to establish and monitor levels of customer satisfaction with the Information Centres and with the tourism product on offer in Allerdale.

Objective 9

To work in partnership in a unified approach to promoting the area to both visitors and residents to gain maximum benefit from the available resources.

Actions:

- a) Investigate ways of promoting the area through Cumbria Tourist Board and in conjunction with other local authorities and agencies and providing a strong united voice for tourism both within the county, regionally and nationally.
- b) Regularly review our partnership with the Western Lake District Tourism Partnership, Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership and others to ensure effectiveness of resources.
- c) Regularly review our contribution to distribution of the Western Lake District Holiday Guide to ensure effectiveness of resources.
- d) Develop photographic library of images of Allerdale for use in promotional activity.
- e) Work with partners to raise the profile of the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- f) Target all branches of the press and media to promote the area as a great place to visit.
- g) Promote the strengths of the area, its events and facilities, through Allerdale Outlook magazine to residents, and through them to visitors.
- h) Maintain Allerdale Borough Council's website with up-to-date information for the public and links to appropriate partner websites, such as the Western Lake District site.

Objective 10

To assist community groups with small grants and marketing assistance for projects that are compatible with the aims of this Tourism Strategy.

Actions:

- a) Identify resources to provide a point of contact for community groups and events organisers to provide advice and assistance with projects which will develop Allerdale's target markets, as identified by current research.

Outcomes of aim 3

- to evaluate the effectiveness of the Tourism Action Plan
- Performance can be benchmarked against other areas
- Lobbying strategies for the sector and increase inward investment can be developed.
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Increased numbers of visitors
- Profile of the area is raised
- Increases civic pride

- 6.6 To complement these aims and for tourism in Allerdale to be sustainable in economic, environmental, cultural and social terms, the following principles are considered to be important and will be adopted to drive the actions from this Strategy ensuring a long-term future for the industry:

A. Working in Partnership

Allerdale will work in effective partnerships with appropriate stakeholders for the benefit of visitors, the tourism industry and residents in Allerdale.

B. A Quality Experience

Quality in Allerdale can be perceived as a variable experience. By gaining a competitive edge through consistently meeting and exceeding customer expectations and in offering a relevant tourism product that is value for money, Allerdale will benefit from repeat business and secure a positive reputation as a quality destination.

- 6.7 The Tourism Action Plan, which supports the Tourism Strategy identifies key priorities, timescales, resources, the role of stakeholders, partnership mechanisms and monitoring. It will be updated regularly to ensure its continued relevance. The Tourism Action Plan will be reviewed annually by the Executive Member with responsibility for Tourism and appropriate advising officers at which time tasks may be amended, deleted or added, depending on progress and performance.

7. Evaluating the success of the tourism strategy

- 7.1 It is crucial we can measure our success and see where additional effort is required to address underachievement. The Council's overall achievement of the Tourism Strategy will be evaluated by measuring the success of the following areas:

- Increased wealth in the local economy from increased visitor spend, visitor figures and by the creation of tourism-related jobs, as measured through STEAM;
- Enhanced visitor experience recognised through surveys in Tourist Information Centres, and;

- Increased resident satisfaction with the sustained environment and cultural offering, identified through surveys in Allerdale Outlook and Best Value User Satisfaction surveys.

7.2 Specific measurement and evaluation of actions will be identified in the Action Plan.

Copies of the Allerdale Tourism Strategy can be accessed on www.allerdale.gov.uk
Details of the Action Plan will be available on www.allerdale.gov.uk from Summer 2005.
Copies of the strategy in alternative formats are available on request.

For additional information regarding tourism in Allerdale, please contact John Reynolds, Communications and Marketing Manager, on 01900 702526 or email john.reynolds@allerdale.gov.uk.

Appendix 1

List of consultees

The following individuals and organisations attended the consultation days or who were asked for feedback upon the draft Strategy and whose comments and opinions were invaluable in the development of this document:

Allerdale Borough Council

Councillor Jim Musgrave, Leader of Allerdale Borough Council

Councillor John Crouch

Councillor Joe Milburn

Councillor Alan Smith

Councillor Margaret Jackson

Councillor Jeffrey Gardner

Councillor Dianne Moyes

Ian Payne, Head of Environment

Sharon Thompson, Head of Customer Services

William Carruthers, Head of Property

David Martin, Head of Regeneration

Paul Bramley, Financial services Manager

Alison Miller, Customer Services Manager

Ann Sumpton, Customer Services Team Leader

Denise Grey, Workington Tourist Information Centre

Peter Daley, Environmental Health Services Manager

Eddie Woodthorpe, Corporate Services Manager

Tony Smith, Car Parks Manager

Ron Denby, Contract Services Manager

Mark Edwards, Leisure Services Manager

Philip Crouch, Heritage and Arts Manager

Ben Brinicombe, Rural Regeneration Officer

Janet Connolly, Head of Performance Improvement

Alex FitzGerald, Senior Performance Improvement Officer

Julie Parr, Research and Information Assistant

John Reynolds, Communications and Marketing Manager

Helen Murphy, Communications and Marketing Officer

Other organizations and businesses

John Bell, Carlisle City Council

Alastair Wyllie, Cockermouth Partnership

David Bertram, Cockermouth Town Council

Mike Williams, Copeland Borough Council

Graham Kennedy, Cumbria Tourist Board

Richard Greenwood, Cumbria Tourist Board

Jane Brantom, Hadrian's Wall Partnership

Gaynor Green, Jennings Brewery

Alison Hewitson, Jennings Brewery

Mike Hirst, Keswick Tourism Association

Duncan Miller, Keswick Tourism Association
Karen Walton, Keswick Tourism Association
Pam Gradon, Lake District Coast Aquarium
Tony Pearce, Lake District National Park Authority
Liz Campbell, Lakeland Sheep and Wool Centre
Dennis Banner, Lakes Hospitality Association
John Damment, Lakes Hospitality Association
Graeme McGrory, Maryport Festivals
Sandra Walling, Maryport Festivals
Denise Smalley, Maryport Town Centre
Joanne Watson, Maryport Town Centre
Andy Collard, Monkhouse Hill Cottages
Penny Webb, National Trust
Victoria Nixon, North Allerdale Partnership
Jane Laskey, Senhouse Roman Museum
Norman Hammond, Silloth Tourism Action Group
Brian Irving, Solway Coast AONB
Patric Gilchrist, Theatre by the Lake
Susan Eccles, Trout Hotel
Peter Frost-Pennington, Western Lake District Tourism Partnership
Kerry McPhee, Western Lake District Tourism Partnership
Irving Scott, Workington Civic Trust
Carol Grey, Workington Town Centre Manager

Residents were consulted through the Winter edition of the Council magazine "Allerdale Outlook", which is distributed to all residential households in Allerdale.

In addition, over 300 businesses working in the tourism industry in Allerdale were surveyed.

Details of all consultation can be obtained from the Council's Performance Improvement Unit, by telephoning 01900 702730.