

Subject:	Visitor Economy Strategy	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Full Council	Date:	9 December 2020
Report of:	Economic Development Officer	Portfolio Holder:	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required: No	Attached:	No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required: No	Attached:	No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	To consider and approve the Visitor Economy Strategy for the whole of Rossendale and accompanying Action Plan.
1.2	All future minor amendments to the strategy to be delegated to the Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.
1.3	For Full Council to review the strategy on an annual basis and update on the progress of the Action Plan.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of the report is to obtain Full Council approval of the updated Visitor Economy Strategy for the whole of Rossendale and accompanying Action Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Corporate Priorities

The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- A connected and successful Rossendale that welcomes sustainable growth: our priority is to ensure that we are well connected to our residents, key partners and stakeholders. We want to make the most of every pound we spend and we are always looking for new and innovative ways to make the resources we do have, work harder for us.
- A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale: our priority is to ensure that we are creating and maintaining a healthy and vibrant place for people to live and visit.

The matters discussed in this report also address directly Priority 4 of the Economic Development Strategy 2018.

3.2 Rationale for the Strategy

Since 2010, the Visitor Economy has been the fastest growing sector in the UK in terms of jobs, in Rossendale approximately 816 are employed in this sector (STEAM figures 2018).

Since the inception of the present Economic Development Department in 2017, work behind the scenes has been on-going to promote Rossendale and support the tourism, leisure, arts and culture industry which is currently worth £63.563m and this has a 2% share overall across Lancashire. By increasing our percentage share, the Council will create jobs and raise investment levels in the borough.

The strategy will accomplish the following objectives:

- Strengthen Rossendale's identity, developing its reputation as a place that people

want to visit

- Attract more day visitors increasing the profitability of operators in the sector
- Increase the number of people staying for one or two nights
- Improve Rossendale's market share across Lancashire
- Attract investment to evolve the visitor offer
- Increase the number of people employed in leisure, tourism, culture and hospitality locally
- See growth in the economic impact of visitors to Rossendale
- Improve the visitor experience which will encourage repeat visitors to Rossendale
- Become more sustainable adapting to ever changing trends

3.3 Formulation of the strategy

The Promoting Rossendale Board is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and has membership consisting of key stakeholders and relevant officers. It meets every 6 months to discuss ideas and methods to promote Rossendale and has an annual operating budget of £40k and has overseen the formulation of the Strategy.

Critical to the development of the Strategy has been the involvement of the Visitor Economy Stakeholder Group. The group is open to all leisure, tourism, arts and culture businesses and many are experts in their field. Together, they have formed various subgroups generating a series of actions to grow key themes, and in doing so they have contributed greatly to the development of the strategy.

The key themes have been identified over a number of years, sparked initially by a 2010 Tourism study and then subsequently by a piece of work completed by Lancaster University Masters Students in 2018, which involved in depth consumer analysis and many surveys undertaken. Combining this with local knowledge and experience formed the preliminary start of the process, identifying 5 key themes for growth:

1. Marketing Rossendale
2. Outdoor Rossendale
3. Lifestyle Rossendale
4. Creative Rossendale
5. Accommodation Rossendale

Stakeholders have taken part in several workshops with a focus on identifying a series of actions to develop these themes and over 60 different organisations offered their feedback on how to build on these ideas. They were then presented at a final summary meeting.

In addition to this, several one to one meetings were held with key partners and other council colleagues operating within the sector who fed back their ideas and suggestions, as well as offer insight into their pipeline projects to help grow Rossendale's Visitor Economy.

Businesses, organisations and events were also invited to complete an online questionnaire with the option to put forward any additional ideas on email. This feedback was gathered along with consumer surveys in 2018. Members also attended a briefing event in which they could make suggestions to improve the Visitor Economy across Rossendale.

This extensive list of engagement, as well as the gathering of crucial data both Regionally

and Nationally has led to the formulation of the Strategy and the accompanying detailed Action Plan- Appendix 1

3.4 **About the Strategy**

This Strategy will harness the power of our strong leisure, arts and culture offer and provide the framework for growth.

The Visitor Economy Strategy for the whole of Rossendale identifies 10 years of action, building on what Rossendale already offers to make it a place that attracts both day and overnight visitors.

The Strategy includes the following:

- A Vision Statement
- Key themes and priorities
- Regional and National context
- Benchmark data for targets
- Expansion of the themes
- Detailed 10-year Action Plan

Broad highlights of the key actions include:

Marketing Rossendale

- Create an inclusive brand for Rossendale
- Create a promotional plan
- Develop a marketing plan
- Improve the knowledge of local residents and businesses
- Provide businesses with a platform to promote themselves
- Develop a signage strategy across Rossendale
- Improve the Visit Rossendale website

Outdoor Rossendale

- Improve the experience of outdoor activities
- Increase spending opportunities of our outdoor assets
- Package up adventure experiences and attract a niche market

Lifestyle Rossendale

- Deliver Masterplans for Bacup and Haslingden
- Develop an Action Plan for Rawtenstall
- Get people using the East Lancashire Railway onto Bank St and surrounding areas
- Develop Rossendale's Food and Drink Economy
- Attract high quality all-year round events

Accommodation Rossendale

- Bring forward suitable camping, caravan and motorhome sites
- Attract a town centre based hotel
- Expand opportunities at existing sites

Creative Rossendale

- Create a skills package to showcase our local artists, artisans, crafts people and musicians
- Develop an Artist Village concept
- Create a series of day, weekend and weeklong itineraries

General Actions

- Supporting Businesses to thrive
- Covid- 19 recovery plan

3.5 Further Consultation

Following the formulation of the Draft Visitor Economy Strategy, a series of consultation activities have taken place to ensure that stakeholders, partners, residents and potential visitors feel that it is ambitious, yet achievable and reflective of their ideas.

It is important to note that this consultation opportunity was in addition to the vast amount of engagement during the development of the Draft Strategy.

The Draft Strategy was subject to the following consultation between the 12th of October 2020 and the 15th of November 2020:

- Published on the Visit Rossendale Website
- Link on the RBC website that takes you to the Visit Rossendale website
- Advertised in the local newspaper and Council noticeboards
- Advertised on social media: Visit Rossendale, Rossendale Council and Invest In Rossendale
- Radio advertisements on Rossendale Radio and Real Life Rossendale pointing people to the Visit Rossendale website
- Press releases in the Free Press, Telegraph and Rossendale Council News
- Email to all Stakeholders and invitation to Stakeholder drop in feedback session on Monday 19th October
- A Council Members briefing session
- Email to all represented on the Promoting Rossendale Board and a final review meeting on the 13th of November.
- Public facing consultation on Thursday 15th October at Rawtenstall Market
- Public Zoom drop in session to replace face to face sessions at Bacup and Haslingden Market in line with Covid 19 restrictions

The consultation responses and engagement have been welcoming of the Council's plan to grow Rossendale's Visitor Economy.

The high quality feedback from existing stakeholders and members of the public has provided more detail behind some of the actions and developed them further. Through this extensive consultation window, we provided the opportunity to feedback on the proposal and the anecdotal feedback was that people felt the Strategy was overwhelmingly positive.

Those spoken to felt that the themes for growth and the Vision were appropriate and achievable, understanding the evidence behind the recommendations of the strategy.

Following the consultation exercise, a series of amendments were put forward to the Promoting Rossendale Board. The strategy has been amended to reflect these.

3.6 Project Costs

The development of the strategy has been an internally produce document by the Economic Development Officer and team which incurred very little expenditure.

The costed items are listed below:

- Appointment of Marketing Lancashire as a Critical Friend £1875

- Design of the strategy and photographs £500
- Consultation and promotional activity, such as radio adverts and press releases £400

The Promoting Rossendale Board has funded the above activity out of the annually assigned £40k budget; any additions will need to go through the Council's annual budget report.

4. RISK

4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- The Action Plan does not achieve financial and personnel resource affecting the delivery of identified projects: Mitigation: The Action Plan has been developed with understanding of the staffing and cost requirements, with many actions presenting little cost. Each item will be assigned funding either through the annual Promoting Rossendale Board allocation of £40k or by seeking external investment to achieve them. Completing the items identified in the Action Plan will be the responsibility of the Economic Development Officer with the Promoting Rossendale Board seeing the annual activity.
- Stakeholders and businesses do not embrace the change are not pro-active with their assigned responsibilities. Mitigation: Early engagement with Stakeholders with several feedback opportunities has significantly reduced this risk.
- Some projects identified in the Action Plan do not receive statutory permissions concluding their development. Mitigation: Relevant experts and consultants within their fields will be engaged with to ensure statutory permissions are achieved where appropriate. Partnership working will be at the forefront of any project that is put forward.
- The 10-year vision and KPI's are not achieved. Mitigation: Rossendale Council has clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of those that are assigned actions within the Action Plan. The strategy and KPI's will be reviewed every year. The Promoting Rossendale Board will have overall responsibility for ensuring the vision and KPI's are achieved.
- Covid-19 has a continuing damaging effect on organisations in the sector and the Strategy cannot achieve its targets. Mitigation: The strategy incorporates a Covid-19 recovery plan within the Action Plan, this seeks to help businesses diversify their offer, create sustainable business plans, keep visitors safe as well as draw down the necessary funding to achieve them.

5. FINANCE

5.1 The costs of producing the strategy have been funded from the Promoting Rossendale Budget.

Any projects arising from the strategy will be assessed individually and supported by a costed business case, which will detail how they are to be funded.

When considering the 2021/22 MTFs, Members will consider funding for implementation of the strategy along with the Council's other priorities.

6. LEGAL

6.1 There is no statutory requirement to develop a Visitor Economy Strategy however this document sets out the Council's ambitions over the next 10 years. There are no legal implications arising out of the body of the report or proposed strategy although each

action within the Action Plan will be subject to continued governance arrangements.

7. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Visitor Economy Strategy supports the Council’s Corporate Priorities and adopted 2018 Economic Development Strategy.

Details of consultation undertaken to develop the Strategy is set out within the body of the report. Relevant and proportionate consideration will be given to equalities for projects set out in the Action Plan to be undertaken within the community.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 This Strategy will deliver 10 years of action to grow the Visitor Economy sector, creating jobs and increasing the economic impact of the sector.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Visitor Economy Strategy for the whole of Rossendale	Appendix 1

Visitor Economy Strategy for the whole of Rossendale 2020-2030

Rossendale
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Crawshawbooth

Visit
Rossendale

INVEST IN
Rossendale

Executive Summary:

This is a Visitor Economy Strategy for the whole of Rossendale. Delivering this strategy will stimulate market growth in the sector through adding value to what we've got, promoting ourselves and all working together.

It is about how we harness the power of our strong leisure, arts and culture offer to put Rossendale on the map as somewhere to visit and stay, with a striking brand that promotes our outdoor adventures, working closely with the people that live here to encourage their friends and family to stay and explore our unique landscapes and market towns whilst immersing themselves in interesting stories to be heard and quirky attractions all year round.

The intent of the strategy is to improve the experience residents and visitors have by providing our organisations, events and attractions with the support to help them thrive and the platforms to tell everyone about them.

This strategy is about delivering 10 years of action building on the existing Visitor Economy for Rossendale to make it a place that people just over the borders come to visit.

Our work over the last few years has identified key themes for growth:

1. Marketing Rossendale
2. Outdoor Rossendale
3. Lifestyle Rossendale
4. Accommodation Rossendale
5. Creative Rossendale

The Action Plan appended to this Strategy identifies the steps taken to grow these themes. Rossendale's businesses, residents and visitors will all benefit as a result of this strategy.

Our Vision

“With a beautiful lifestyle offer, including heritage and cultural experiences set amongst stunning scenery, Rossendale provides the perfect outdoor adventure experience. By 2030, Rossendale will have built an unrivalled reputation as a year-round visitor destination for families and foodies alike.”

Rawtenstall Market



Introduction:

In reaching distance of Manchester and Leeds, Rossendale is well-placed to pave the way as a popular visitor destination.

As East Lancashire's cultural hub, Rossendale is home to one of England's best preserved mill towns, with beautiful, historic architecture, stunning hill tops and picturesque "Christmas Card Villages". Elegant, country lifestyle intertwines with a quirky and imaginative cultural scene where visitors can explore a range of adventure activities, creative events and experience adrenaline sports close by to each other.

There is so much to experience, Rossendale is perfect for a relaxing/country weekend break or a family day out. Within 90 minutes, Rossendale could access 15million people.

Yet, people just over its borders don't know what Rossendale does offer. The Visitor Economy is the best way that we can show external visitors just what Rossendale has to offer.

Stakeholders, partners, residents and potential visitors have come together, through workshops, forums, surveys, and one to ones to help understand how we can develop and encourage the growth of Rossendale's Visitor Economy Sector, and make a Rossendale a place for everyone to experience.

Not only will the first 2 years of this strategy focus on restoring confidence in the Visitor Economy sector, ensuring it operates as it was prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, we will also be progressing many of the actions that have emerged through the development of this strategy.

The performance of the strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis with a full performance monitoring and evaluation exercise completed in Year 9.

National and Regional Picture:

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in Britain, with an expected annual growth rate of 3.8% and by 2025 is expected to be worth £257.4bn providing 3.7m jobs and it has been the biggest growing sector in employment terms since 2010¹.

Nationally, there has been an increase in domestic tourism² and in 2017 domestic day visitors contributed £50 billion³ to the economy, Rossendale contributed £43.030m⁴ of this.

Rising Trends for Rossendale to capitalise on:

- More people taking frequent short breaks (1-3 nights)
- Increased popularity of visiting somewhere for the day
- People looking to experience "escapism" (getting away from everyday pressures) in convenient countryside locations⁵

- People looking for personalised experiences and local culture
- People being able to book online and find out more information about where they are staying as well as sharing their own content

The many things to do in a small geographical area means Rossendale is in a great position to benefit from these growing trends.

Regionally, the Economic Impact of visitors to Lancashire has seen a 3.8% increase Year on year, Rossendale surpassed this with a year on year increase of 7.8% in 2018⁶.

Clearly, the sector is growing organically but with direction, focus and resource, this increase can be significant.

Across Lancashire, the tourism industry is worth £4.41bn (2018 figure). Rossendale's Economic Impact is £63.563m supporting 816 jobs.

¹ Visit Britain, Deloitte 2013

² People in Britain visiting other part of Britain

³ Visit Britain Annual Review

⁴ 2017 Day Visitor Steam Data

⁵ Barclays Staycation 2019 research

⁶ 2018 Steam Data

52% of 25-34 yr olds plan to spend more time in the UK.

The Halo, Haslingden

Lancashire Trends:

- 9/10 Visitors come for the day
- Those that do stay (10%), contribute to 50% of the spend

Based on this fact, it is important that The Visitor Economy strategy focuses on both day and overnight visitors.

As well as being in the East of Lancashire, Rossendale is also part of the South Pennines which is known for its nature and landscapes and The Pennine Way walking and riding route where 600,000 people live.

Key projects happening in the wider area to add value to Rossendale's Visitor Economy:

Designating the South Pennines as a National Park

Pennine Prospects have gained significant momentum in designating the South Pennines as a National Park. This change in status will benefit Rossendale connecting it to a wider platform for promotion and embrace the distinctiveness of the South Pennines.

Lancashire Tourism Growth Strategy 2020-2030

Marketing Lancashire is undergoing a new Tourism Growth Strategy that is SMART. The emerging Strategy identifies enhancing the leisure offer across the County and their intelligence indicates themes of Wellness and Discovery along with Fun and Entertainment as the main components of the strategy. Rossendale's Visitor Economy slots within these themes and the national campaigns that will compliment them.

Lancashire 2025 bid for the City of Culture

The county is putting together a bid as a "Virtual City" which will promote and deliver ambitious cultural plans across the region. With a plethora of talented makers, creators, artisans and imaginative people, Rossendale will benefit from this opportunity.

We can see there is great potential, evidence and opportunities to grow Rossendale's visitor economy. As long as we are pro-active, adaptable and responsive to changes in trends.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic has been a major set-back for Rossendale's (and other areas) tourism, leisure and cultural sector, we need to take this as our opportunity to better ourselves and build a bright future.

Cowm Reservoir, Whitworth

Rossendale has a 2% share in Lancashire's Visitor Economy

Our vision for 2030

“With a beautiful lifestyle offer, including heritage and cultural experiences set amongst stunning scenery, Rossendale provides the perfect outdoor adventure experience. By 2030, Rossendale will have built an unrivalled reputation as a year-round visitor destination for families and foodies alike.”

How will we achieve this?

Our 10 year plan has been developed with these underlying principles:

Adding value and building on what we've got – this is all about supporting our businesses, events and community groups to thrive through focused plans and investment, upskilling and accreditations whilst improving the overall visitor experience, with more events, accommodation sites and digital infrastructure

Celebrating and telling people about us – this is all about transforming the perceptions of Rossendale, creating our narrative and sharing the stories of our interesting quirks and good news of our businesses putting us on the map as a visitor destination

Working together – this is all about the power of businesses and groups collaborating, creating a series of packages, tours and itineraries whilst maximising our opportunities with our partners

These principles intertwine with our 5 identified themes for growth:

1. Marketing Rossendale
2. Outdoor Rossendale
3. Lifestyle Rossendale
4. Accommodation Rossendale
5. Creative Rossendale

By growing these themes we will:

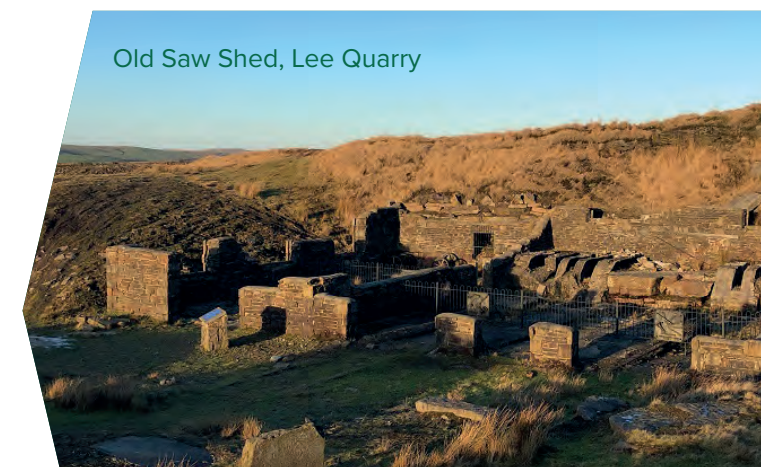
- Give Rossendale an identity by developing its reputation as a place that people want to come to and have heard of
- Attract more day visitors increasing the profitability of operators in the sector
- Increase the number of people staying for one or two nights (weekend break lodges)
- Improve Rossendale's market share across Lancashire
- Draw down investment to evolve the visitor offer
- Increase the number of people employed in leisure, tourism, culture and hospitality locally
- See growth in the economic impact of visitors to Rossendale
- Improve the visitor experience which will encourage repeat visitors to Rossendale
- Become more sustainable adapting to ever changing trends

Our Goals:

By 2023 – To restore Economic Impact to pre-covid figures (2018 Benchmark £63.563m)

By 2030 –

- To increase Economic Impact from £63.563m to £78m (3% growth Year on Year)
- Increase employment in the sector from 816 jobs to 1000 jobs
- Increase Visitor Numbers from 1.6m to 2m
- Increase Social Media Followers from 5221 to 10,000
- Improve town centre average footfall counts from 14,387 to 18,000.
- Increase total bedstock of 267 beds to 315



Old Saw Shed, Lee Quarry

A Visitor Economy Snapshot for Rossendale:

Rossendale's Visitor Economy is growing. The STEAM data evidence shows that between 2017 and 2018, the economic impact grew significantly by 7.8% year on year and the total number of visitors grew by 4.2%, these numbers have been growing for the last 5⁷ years. Total expenditure in this sector is £63.563m.

Helpful facts for Rossendale to take into account (Steam DATA 2018):

- 1.299 million day visits were made to Rossendale in 2018
- Day visitors generate an economic impact of £46.774m.
- 816 people employed in Visitor Economy Sector
- 140,000 visits were made by visitors staying overnight
- Overnight guests contribute an economic impact of £16.788m
- Overnight stays have seen a marginal rise despite limited availability of accommodation
- 70,000 people live in the area

Other things to consider about our Customer:

- They are mostly domestic, those that live here or close by
- It's mainly family or couples⁸ (average party size of 2.66)
- Average day trip spend is £25.56⁹
- Majority of people choose to stay in a hotel followed by BnB and then a guesthouse across Lancashire

- The top two things that people want to do in Lancashire is Outdoor Activities and Food and Drink¹⁰ which is reinforced with our local survey, with the addition of also visiting a museum
- People are willing to travel up to 45 miles for a day trip or longer depending on the activity
- People find out about things to do through a Google search, followed by social media, websites and Trip Advisor
- Visiting family and friends is one of the biggest drivers for tourism

What does this tell us about our offer?

It needs to

- be affordable
- flagship the abundance of outdoor experiences available
- incorporate our thriving food and drink scene
- entice families and couples
- create more places to stay as those guests typically spend more per trip
- effectively engage its residents to champion the area to friends and family
- have a significant presence within a 45 mile radius
- have a web platform with excellent SEO and google rankings

Helmshore Textile Museum



Rossendale
4.2% increase in
visitor numbers
between 17-18.



The Hill UK,
Rawtenstall

Marketing Rossendale

With so much variety and things to do in such a small area, we need to be pro-active in how we promote ourselves and each attraction. We are competing with neighbours who are bigger in size with better transport links, so we need to get ourselves heard and our story told, creating an overall destination brand, that will put Rossendale firmly on the map.

Visiting family and friends is one of the biggest reasons for getting people to Rossendale and the wider Lancashire area, improving the knowledge and upskilling our local residents and visitors presents a huge opportunity for us to creatively market the area to the people that live here, through exceptional experiences, social media, toolkits, satellite tourism offices and workshops.

The development of a signage strategy, which will consider gateway signage at key entry points, town centres, footpaths and road signs will reflect the branding and connect Rossendale.

Peersclough Farm Pony Trekking



We have various ways of telling people about us, what's going on and what things are happening, but we want to use this as our opportunity to give justice to the work we have done previously.

We will strengthen our partnerships and do more with our positions on their websites, we will develop our own website to become more than just a directory, with better Google rankings and we will complete targeted campaigns in Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and the Wider Lancashire areas.

We will streamline social media and double the combined 5221¹² social media followers the Visit Rossendale platforms attract by creating a social media and press plan and define a budget that allows us to implement technology that monitors key trends.

¹² 1759 Facebook likes, 884 Instagram followers, 2578 Twitter followers as of 21st September 2020.

Key Actions:

- Create an inclusive brand for Rossendale
- Create a promotional plan
- Develop a marketing plan
- Improve the knowledge of local residents and businesses
- Provide businesses with a platform to promote themselves
- Develop a signage strategy across Rossendale
- Improve the Visit Rossendale website



Outdoor Rossendale

It's the perfect place if you are looking for a rural location that has all the benefits of a city lifestyle, with lots to do in a small area, whether you are visiting for the day, a weekend or for a week.

Our landscape is the quintessence of Rossendale, it charms from every angle of the Valley, peace and tranquillity are found in abundance and memories are made. Our dramatic topography lends itself as an attraction in its own right for walkers, bikers, riders and nature lovers, as well as being home to some of our specialist outdoor adventure attractions like The Hill UK, Whitworth Waterski Centre and famous mountain bike routes.

This outdoor natural asset has potential to do even more for Rossendale and through the Covid-19 pandemic, more and more people have been on the hills exploring their local area through walking, riding and cycling which is an intrinsic part of the Valley lifestyle. We want to develop our outdoor links, expanding the Valley of Stone Greenway to connect more areas of Rossendale, with an outdoor hub for bike and boot hire as well as café facilities along with making features out of the tunnels on the route. We want to attract a blue ribbon outdoor event every 3 years and keep developing our outdoor connections, with better signage and maps, as well as attract funding to develop our facilities, offering lessons for all abilities in all types of cycling and horse riding.

We also recognise that we are unique in part of our offer to attract visitors. We've got so many high energy experiences within a few miles of each other, spanning the whole scale of adrenaline, from indoor rock climbing, to off-roading, escape rooms to snowboarding. Packaging these activities up together will help to attract a niche market and encourage people to come and stay in our area.

Key Actions:

- Package up adventure experiences and attract a niche market
- Improve the experience of outdoor activities
- Increase spending opportunities of our outdoor assets



Archery at
The Adrenaline Centre,
Haslingden

Lifestyle Rossendale

We've got distinctive town centres, each with their own vibe and character. Collectively, they share fantastic links to the countryside and nature, where you can reach fields and hillsides within a mile walk from each centre as well as fascinating architecture and heritage which tell Rossendale's story. That's not to mention the thriving "foodie" reputation that has recently gained momentum, showcased in the Valley At Work Food and Drink Guide. Yet each centre is unique.

Rawtenstall is known for its independent boutique shops and artisanal market, its leisure experiences like Lucardo Escape Rooms, The Whitaker Museum and Art Gallery and the East Lancashire Railway as well as its reputable events on the town square and cosmopolitan night time scene with quirky eateries and sought after entertainment at St Mary's Chambers.

Haslingden is developing a reputation for walkers and riders due to its close proximity to the scenic routes around the Halo panopticon and Grane Reservoir. It is home to the infamous Cissy Greens and DT Laws Butchers, both of which have a following for their award winning pies. It is also famous for being the birth place of the worldly known inventor, William Cockerill and its industrial heritage is apparent through its townscape and close proximity to various mills, including Helmshore Textile Museum.

Bacup is bucking the national trend and pre covid-19, reversed its decline, increasing its shop occupancy rates, enticing independent microbreweries, shops and café bars, the theatre reopened attracting stand out shows and entertainment and it is home to community groups that organise excellent events. The town is regarded as one of the best preserved mill towns because of its unique architecture, quaint buildings and interesting history. It has recently

benefitted from investment through the Bacup THI project, which has brought the whole community together sharing a passion for their town.

We've had a taste of the benefits of large and small scale investments in our towns, with the new bus station and New Hall Hey in Rawtenstall, the transformed buildings in Bacup which have created a buzz and the fresh approach to partnership working at Rawtenstall Market, all of which have given us the appetite to deliver more.



Northern Whisper Brewing Company



Key Actions:

- Deliver Masterplans for Bacup and Haslingden
- Develop an Action Plan for Rawtenstall
- Get people using the East Lancashire Railway onto Bank St and surrounding areas
- Develop Rossendale's Food and Drink Economy
- Attract high quality all-year round events

Bank Street, Rawtenstall

The Bacup 2040 Partnership Board has already secured more than £1m to deliver a High Street Heritage Action Zone, with further funding applications in place to deliver the Bacup 2040 Vision and Masterplan. The Haslingden 2040 Board has been formed, working hard to seek investment to achieve its Vision by 2040, pedestrianising a section allowing space for events all year round to pop up in, with much needed seating amongst pocket parks on the slopes with plans to develop the market area.

Rawtenstall is also under-going developments too, with a partnership proposal to take on the market and an action plan to maintain and encourage more usage of the vibrant town square area and we also want to do more with the attractions within a mile of Rawtenstall, creating digital walking loops to attractions like The Whitaker, and Weavers Cottage. The East Lancashire Railway is the biggest attraction in East Lancashire and there is huge opportunity, particularly for Rawtenstall to entice visitors into the town through a series of marketing materials and walking loops. Visitors will be welcomed with an interactive and accessible promenade over the river linking directly to the Town Square.

The foundations of our town centres and wider areas of Rossendale are our friendly communities, passionate people and local talent. Our culture, quirks and past times bring people to the area all year round. We host the National Gravy Wrestling Championships, the Lantern Parade and Waterfoot Wakes as well as Heritage Open Days, Whitworth Rushcart Festival and town centre events. We want

to attract more high quality events that are co-ordinated all year round and develop the ones we have to get even more local people involved.

Our food and drink reputation is gaining huge momentum and there is a boost in demand for quality, local produce. We have a range of food and drink experiences, we are home to Britain's last original temperance bar (Fitzpatrick's), award winning restaurants, manufacturers of quality products and a vast selection of local artisans. We want to do more to ensure our food and drink is a visible part of our offer by evolving the Valley At Work Food and Drink guide, hosting an annual Food and Drink Awards, developing a series of walking "Taste Tours" and developing our relationship with partners to deliver large scale food and drink events in Rossendale.



Stacksteads Lantern Parade

Accommodation Rossendale

We also showcase our quirkiness through our accommodation, with tree houses and yurts at Cronkshaw Fold Farm, glamping pods and luxury cottages at Rossendale Holiday Cottages and family run BnBs but it's already in demand and short supply.

Our previous work has established that we need to expand our accommodation offer. We will actively seek and support quality accommodation across the Borough, attracting town centre hotels, caravan and motorhome sites. We will bring forward camping site proposals and work with existing businesses, such as the Hill UK to offer chalet style or youth hostel style accommodation. We will also work with external funders to encourage characterful building owners to transform them into boutique hotels and we will work with venues and attractions within a 30-minute radius to ensure our accommodation providers are included on their listings.

Key Actions:

- Bring forward suitable camping, caravan and motorhome sites
- Attract a town centre based hotel
- Expand opportunities at existing sites

View from Grane Road, Haslingden

Creative Rossendale

We ooze creativity which can be experienced across the valley and we've got over 40 professional artists concentrated in such a small area which we want to build upon. We've got our own community radio station, live concert venues and amateur dramatic theatre groups all of which reflect our personality and provide outstanding experiences for residents and visitors alike.

Our heritage is evident in our buildings, which reflect our industrial past, as well as being showcased by the many artefacts in Bacup Natural History Museum, Whitworth Heritage Museum and Weavers Cottage to name just a few. We've also got archaeological sites which are gathering lots of interest and special tributes to significant historic people dotted around our landscape, like Waugh's Well and we are home to the sets of popular TV shows and adverts.

We want to do more with our heritage, arts and culture sector, expanding it through the creation of day and overnight itineraries that promote the various venues, attractions and interests. As well as developing a skills package for local artisans and the

formation of a creative industry network, who will be visible on our town squares, in co-working spaces and through public art.

We also want to work with organisations and community groups to attract funding to build on what they've got, like the emerging expansion at The Whitaker, the heritage platform improvements at the East Lancashire Railway and the Bacup Cultural Consortium. We will encourage businesses to improve their Trip Advisor presence and rankings, secure relevant accreditations and upskill their staff, through training and qualifications.

There are 816¹¹ people employed in the industry and we want to support our businesses to encourage at least another 80 jobs over the next 10 years.

¹¹ Steam Figures 2018

Whitaker Museum



Key Actions:

- Create a skills package to showcase our local artists, artisans, crafts people and musicians
- Develop an Artist Village concept
- Create a series of day, weekend and weeklong itineraries



Lucardo Escape Rooms



Detailed Action Plan

This action plan provides more detail to the key actions identified within the Strategy.

It is split into the 5 themes, with additional actions assigned to encouraging the growth of businesses and a covid-19 recovery plan.

This Action Plan will be reviewed every two years.

Objective	Actions	Priority	Who	Timescale
Marketing Rossendale	<p>Create an inclusive brand for Rossendale, considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong outdoor experiences offer - Heritage, Arts, quirks and culture - Food and drink, independent shops and nightlife - Health and Well-being - Scenic location and how to incorporate South Pennines and the rest of Lancashire - TV shows - Accessibility and Affordability - Friendly people and communities 	High	Economic Development Branding, Marketing and Promotion Subgroup	Years 1-2
Marketing Rossendale	<p>Create a promotional plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define a budget for high quality images and photo banks - Identify funding to tell our story in various ways including posters, digital guides, interactive maps, interesting facts and architectural elements - Complete strategic signage improvements across the Valley, including gateway signage at all entry points and towns/villages with input from local artists demonstrating attractive local features, pedestrian and transport signage, repairing, improving and increasing signage where appropriate - Create a series of video snapshots to make you feel emotional and proud to promote the area, like the Freddie Flintoff video for Lancashire with associated media plan - Develop links with local radio stations for the sharing of news and updates on events, attractions and things to do - Work with local Estate Agents to educate them on the unique selling points of the area using this as a channel to disperse key information and encourage them to use our resources, such as photographs and films in their marketing material - Secure a relationship with Marketing Manchester and introduce a series of campaigns in Manchester and Preston with things like “feels like a million miles away...” to promote the country lifestyle to city goers - Website updates, including on Visit Rossendale, Visit Lancashire, Pennine Prospects etc. - Regular press releases celebrating our local businesses with prioritisation of award winning venues - Actively ensuring businesses are registered on Google My Business - Publicise information on venues that are compliant with Disability Access Rules and work on campaigns where disability is welcomed - Develop a Membership & Badge Scheme for “tourist approved” venues, with window stickers, showing they are accessible and have the right insurance 	Medium	Economic Development Individual organisations Promoting Rossendale Board Branding Marketing and Promotion Subgroup Local radio stations Property Services Department	Years 1-2

Objective	Actions	Priority	Who	Timescale
Marketing Rossendale	<p>Develop a marketing plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defining a budget for frequent advertising and featured articles in local magazines, newspapers and publications - Banners, billboard advertising, posters on transport and in public places - Blogs and SEO on the Visit Rossendale Website - A social media plan that showcases local businesses, events and attractions with campaigns like “Be a local tourist” - Defining a budget for technology that allows key trends to be monitored, such as footfall counting in the town centres or at key locations - Leaflets and brochures on the local area - Maximising partnerships, influencing area wide campaigns and initiatives, feeding into Visit Lancashire’s emerging strategy and Pennine Prospects emerging strategy and business plan as well as using their relevant platforms to share information - Encourage market research and data gathering at accommodation sites and attractions which can be shared widely to inform marketing choices - Develop a Sense of Place Toolkit for businesses and staff to use, which is memorable and eye catching, with information on the local area. An example is the Pendle one and run this alongside a series of workshops on the local area 	Medium	<p>Economic Development Promoting Rossendale Board</p> <p>Branding, Marketing and Promotion Subgroup</p> <p>Marketing Lancashire</p> <p>RBC Media Department</p> <p>Individual Organisations</p> <p>Pennine Prospects</p>	Years 1-2
Marketing Rossendale	<p>Improve the knowledge of local residents to change perceptions and encourage friends and family referrals by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a resident based marketing strategy with leaflets, local press releases, social media campaigns with celebratory news stories focused on residents first, then businesses and then external visitors - Use the power of local Social Media influencers to champion the area and share information - Encourage businesses to use their conduits and external contacts to maximise promotional opportunities, sharing other venues events and offers - Offer a series of incentivised workshops to local residents, improving their knowledge so they become advocates of Rossendale - Change perceptions from the main roads with a series of initiatives, such as boundary signage and flower schemes - Connect Rossendale’s schools with a wide range of local initiatives, consider forming a Local Cultural Education Partnership between the schools and venues which will reach a local audience - Complete initiatives towards children, with a “passport” which is stamped at each venue they attend - Attend local groups to update on Tourism news, such as Valley At Work, local neighbourhood forums, business associations etc. 	High	<p>Economic Development</p> <p>Visitor Economy Forum</p> <p>Promoting Rossendale Board</p> <p>RBC Media Team</p> <p>RBC Communities Team</p> <p>RBC Operations Team</p> <p>Individual Organisations</p> <p>Local groups</p> <p>Rossendale Schools</p>	Years 1-2
Marketing Rossendale	<p>Provide businesses and events with a centralised method of communication and central promotional platform by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrange a twice yearly Stakeholder Forum with clear TOR - Create and maintain an email distribution list of up to date news for circulation for all businesses in the Visitor Economy Sector 	High	Economic Development	Years 1-2

Objective	Actions	Priority	Who	Timescale
Marketing Rossendale	<p>Improve the Visit Rossendale Website including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasis on the live twitter feed and engagement from businesses - Events calendar - Improved imagery - Various packages and itineraries - Up to date attraction, event and business information - Revised menu bar - Information on parking and public facilities - Community groups and sporting clubs 	High	Economic Development Individual Organisations RBC Media Department	Years 1-2



A'vucciria



Irwell Vale

Objective	Actions	Priority	Who	Timescale
Outdoor Rossendale	<p>Create a sub-brand that promotes Rossendale’s adventure experiences, package the various offers considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any venue, event or attraction using this brand adhere to a certain level of customer service through a series of specific training - Create and co-ordinate a “festival of sports” over a weekend where people can try various outdoor activities from golf to pony trekking 	High	Economic Development Outdoor Rossendale Steering Group Event Co-ordinator	Years 3-6
Outdoor Rossendale	<p>Increase the experience of walking, riding and cycling in Rossendale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop Lee Quarry as a nationally recognised Mountain Bike Trail by improving the trails - Ensure that the Valley of Stone Greenway cycleway connects all the way from Haslingden to Whitworth and feeds into Loveclough and Edenfield, with clear routes into the relevant town centres for expenditure opportunities - Maximise the walking routes and cycling routes in Rossendale, with better signage and links from the main roads - Improve the bridleways and footpaths by working closely with Lancashire County Council to secure maintenance of paths and styles along with way marker signage, including the Rossendale Way and Mary Townley Loop - Change perceptions of Mountain Biking, promoting the benefits of welcoming participants of the sport and external visitors to the area - Improve, maintain and ensure the future security of the Lancashire County Council owned woodlands - Secure funding to make a feature out of the tunnels in Waterfoot, with easy links to the mountain biking or family friendly biking at Stubbylee Park - Create a series of all-ability routes and “Tramper Trails” , for example those in Morecombe - Proactively encourage a mix of providers in outdoor activities, such as Axe Throwing, Bouldering, Outdoor rope courses etc. - Seek a partner for the lease of the Waterfoot Bunker 	High	Economic Development Outdoor Rossendale Steering Group Elected Members Lancashire County Council Individual Organisations Event Co-ordinator	Years 7-10
Outdoor Rossendale	<p>Increase the spend opportunities of walking, riding and cycling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify a suitable cycle hub along the Valley of Stone Greenway and Lee Quarry for affordable bike hire, toilets, training and events and engage with a partner to run it, signposting visitors to Stubbylee Pump Track, Lee Quarry, Bacup Town Centre etc as well as wider Rossendale attractions, The Camel Trail is a good example and Coed Llandegla - Use cycle events to promote the cycle facilities, such as Northern Grip by running pop up showcases at the pump track for example - Develop a scheme to promote “bike friendly” accommodation providers, such as the “Visit England Cycling Welcome Scheme” - Use technology to digitalise walking routes which incorporate stops at coffee shops, feed into the town centres with a range of waymarker signage - Create a month long “Annual Walking Festival” like the one by Visit Eastbourne which encourages various walks and tours such as historic crime walks, heritage walks, TV drama walks, interesting feature walks, ancient archology sites, food and drink walks etc. Tie in with other walks that take place naturally, like the Mary Townley loop and the Annual Round the Hills Walk - Work with partners to develop a series of runs and walks over the hillsides, such as half marathons etc that attract external visitors - Encourage more “bike- friendly” cafés to Rossendale with specific focus within the town centres - Consider cycle hire in town centres at strategic tourist locations, for example at Buffer Stop 	High	Economic Development Outdoor Rossendale Steering Group Elected Members Lancashire County Council Individual Organisations Event Co-ordinator	Years 3-6

Objective	Actions	Priority	Who	Timescale
Lifestyle Rossendale	<p>Deliver Town Centre Visions for Bacup and Haslingden and an Action Plan for Rawtenstall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with each town centre Strategic Board, business associations and local organisations to ensure 2040 visions or action plans are achieved, attracting significant levels of funding where required - Ensure unique selling points for the towns are firmly and obviously established within the next 10 years and the marketing for Rawtenstall includes a “foodie vibe”, cosmopolitan night-time offer, boutique shops and specialist shopping along with lots of things to do - Bring forward proposals for Rawtenstall Town Square with business and community input, considering public art and focal points and opportunities for flexible space, examples include HATCH and Escape to Freight Island, both in Manchester - Develop unique plans for each market in Bacup, Haslingden and Rawtenstall, where delivery partners are maximised - Change policy to allow existing businesses to overspill onto the town square in Rawtenstall promoting leisure with music and socialising opportunities - Maintain and promote free parking, develop a parking strategy for Rawtenstall, toilets and public facilities as part of town centre offerings - Establish satellite tourism offices /information points in Bacup, Rawtenstall and Haslingden where local town information is at the forefront but Rossendale and Lancashire wide information is also shared with interest facts and features - Work with the owner of Waterfoot Arcade to develop plans with a tourism focus 	High	Town Centre Strategic Boards Relevant Town Centre Business Associations Economic Development RBC Planning Department	Years 7-10
Lifestyle Rossendale	<p>Use the pull of the East Lancashire Railway to get customers into Rawtenstall Town Centre and surrounding areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure funding for an interactive and inviting Promenade from Buffer Stop over the River and out onto Fitzpatricks, onto Bank St and up to Rawtenstall Market encouraging people to “wander further” than just the platform as well as with easy connections to The Whitaker Museum - Use Buffer Stop as an ideal location for a tourism hub, with an eye catching and welcoming stand of Rossendale wide material - Use Rossendale Council’s position on the ELR Board to secure collaboration with local businesses for discounted tickets and day itineraries, work closely with businesses in Rawtenstall to achieve this - Create itineraries in line with train timetables, using the 90 minute slot effectively to get a meaningful visit from rail users to the area and approach ELR to increase the length of departure times - Create a series of posters and literature to go onto the trains and station platforms highlighting key venues, couple this with a series of triangle tent pyramid cards and stickers (removable) on the train tables - Update the walking maps and information that are within station platforms - Become more involved in events run by the ELR such as the 1940’s weekend with much better connections and signage to the town centre with vintage buses taking people to and from Bank St and be a conduit between Rawtenstall’s Chamber of Commerce and the ELR - Actively promote aspirations for a commuter rail link into Rossendale - Develop and improve footpaths from the station platform to New Hall Hey 	Medium	Economic Development East Lancashire Railway Branding, Marketing and Promotion Subgroup Valley City Rail link	Years 7-10

Objective	Actions	Priority	Who	Timescale
Lifestyle Rossendale	<p>Develop Rossendale's Food and Drink Economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand the food and drink guide to enthuse people about the various hospitality offers within a venue - Approach relevant partners to put on high quality food and drink events that build on those businesses featured within the food and drink guide, such as the Taste Lancashire Market by Marketing Lancashire - Have a dedicated food and drink awards - Work with a local partner to deliver a range of walking "Taste Tours" 	Medium	Economic Development Valley At Work Marketing Lancashire Environmental Health Individual Organisations	Years 7-10
Lifestyle Rossendale	<p>Expand Rossendale's calendar of events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use Rossendale's brand highlighting its prestige in specialist events to secure its reputation attracting events like the Gravy Wrestling, Rossendale Art Trail, Clog dancing where experiences remain memorable - Secure funding to attract large scale, blue ribbon event in Rossendale hosted every three years, such as a UK Cycle event which builds on our reputation for cycling prestige - Work with existing event organisers to expand their offer, consider music, fashion, food to make them larger and reputable and ensure they connect to Town Centres and Accommodation sites - Create a "go to guide" on how to put on events in Rossendale, which includes working with partners such as Marketing Lancashire, The Police, Lancashire County Council, Transport Providers etc that also includes information on Traffic Management - Develop a grant programme to expand existing events and encourage new events - Arrange an annual meeting with event organisers to co-ordinate dates allowing a greater share in footfall opportunities - Plan a series of events to celebrate Rossendale's 50th Anniversary 	High	Economic Development Event Co-Ordinator Individual Organisations Promoting Rossendale Board	Years 7-10



Whitaker Museum, Rawtenstall



Walking at Rossendale Holiday Cottages

Objective	Actions	Priority	Who	Timescale
Accommodation Rossendale	<p>Bring forward proposals for camping, caravan and motorhome stays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring forward suitable sites - Work with a partner organisation to run the facilities - Educate local residents on the benefits of bringing overnight visitors to an area - Increase publicity to attract VW campervans, with promotional pieces in relevant magazines and featured online articles 	High	Economic Development RBC Planning Partner Organisations	Years 7-10
Accommodation Rossendale	<p>Attract a town centre based hotel to Rossendale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with planning to ensure distinctiveness is protected so that old character is at ease with modern developments - Explore external funding grant schemes to help owners transform empty, characterful buildings into boutique hotels - Proactively seek established brands through a series of discussions, marketing material and local tours 	Medium	Economic Development RBC Planning Department	Years 7-10
Accommodation Rossendale	<p>Encourage more opportunities for overnight and weekend stays by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing upskilling sessions for those considering marketing opportunities on platforms like AirBnB etc - Work with established businesses to establish funding and deliver more accommodation opportunities, like a chalet style or camping at The Hill UK, bunk style or youth hostels at Whitworth Waterski centre etc. - Increasing opportunities at existing accommodation sites, for example with bike hire, yoga retreats, walking tours at their facilities - Encouraging Rossendale based accommodation providers to work with Calderdale, Bury, Burnley and Hyndburn attractions to promote their offer - Working with partners such as Marketing Lancashire to promote accommodation venues within their guides 	Medium	Economic Development Individual Organisations Marketing Lancashire RBC Planning Department	Years 7-10



Objective	Actions	Priority	Who	Timescale
Creative Rossendale	<p>Identify a creative industry network in Rossendale by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using the 40 artist directory created by Rossendale Art Trail to create a package of skills, replicate this with a directory of musicians and craftspeople - Establish an artist's village with a visible town centre presence - Encouraging museum collaboration through artefact cataloguing and sharing local knowledge and online directories - Ensuring that the Irwell Tapestry is displayed, well promoted and has links to the artist's background and history of Bacup - Ensuring regular engagement with the Design and Heritage Champion - Engaging with the Lancashire 2025 City of Culture Bid - Seek funding to develop a "permanent hub of artists" and consider characterful buildings for the setting - Create opportunities to spotlight Art produced by Rossendale's Creative Network in public spaces 	Medium	Economic Development Marketing Lancashire RBC Communities Elected Member	Years 3-6



The Hill UK






Grip and Go at the Adrenaline Centre

Objective	Actions	Priority	Who	Timescale
Support our businesses to thrive	<p>Create a series of day, night, overnight, weekend and week-long itineraries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure these are on the Visit Rossendale website and key partner sites - Strengthen packages by working with venues not necessarily in Rossendale enhancing the offer through length, experience and quality - Include itineraries grouped in Geography as well as genre such as Heritage, Arts, Culture, Food, Outdoors, Health and Well-being, Affordable and Family Friendly - Include places to stay as part of the package 	High	Economic Development Individual Organisations RBC Media Department	Years 1-2
Support our businesses to thrive	<p>Encourage business expansion by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updating and sharing knowledge on suitable funding opportunities and provide advice via a dedicated Rossendale Business Advisor - Running a series of relevant workshops for leisure, tourism and cultural businesses, with topics like “improving trip advisor rankings” and “Search Engine Optimisation” and other platforms to help businesses keep on top of technology updates as they arise - Evaluating all schemes that require improvement and attract external funding to support them, examples include The Irwell Sculpture Trail, The Shoe Trail, The Whitaker, The Hill etc - Inspiring applications for relevant awards and accreditations e.g Green Flag Accreditation at Stubblelee Park, Lancashire Tourism Awards, R Awards, Trip Advisor etc - Proactively assisting with long term strategies and forward plans for specific venues and assets, for example the “Stubblelee Hall and Park Masterplan”, Rossendale Parks, Rawtenstall Market Vision, The Whitaker Expansion etc which cements their longevity and increases quality - Encouraging businesses and events to adapt their offer, with particular focus on Sundays where many people look for family focused activities and things to do - Assisting businesses with securing relevant permissions - Upskilling staff in the sector, through relevant qualifications, such as customer service and marketing - Providing businesses with up to date knowledge on Apprenticeship and Degree Apprenticeship opportunities 	Medium	Economic Development Business Advisor RBC Planning Department RBC Public Protection Department Training Providers and Colleges Partners, such as Marketing Lancashire and Pennine Prospects	Years 3-6
Deliver a 2 Year range of Covid related activities to restore the sector to how it was pre-pandemic	<p>Actions to include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business Advisor Appointment - Relevant funding and grant programmes - Marketing campaigns - Business Workshops - Covid-related training sessions - Temporary adjustments in open spaces - Learning from the Covid pandemic - Link into the Redefining Lancashire Recovery Campaign 	High	Economic Development Business Advisor Boost Business Lancashire RBC Planning Department Lancashire County Council	Years 1-2

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