



the strategic context

The Tourism Strategy for the Winchester District 2004-08 sits within a strategic hierarchy in Winchester City Council represented below. It is also informed by wider policies and strategies at all levels, notably those of Hampshire County Council and of the regional tourist board, Tourism South East. Winchester's own policies aim to harmonise with these as far as is desirable or appropriate in the local context.



how is the city council involved?

Tourism is a diverse and fragmented industry. The City Council plays a vital role in co-ordinating private and public sector efforts to manage, develop, champion and promote it at every level.

The City Council is also very actively engaged in a practical way. For example, it:

- ▶ provides much of the infrastructure of tourism, essential services such as the tourist information centre, signposting, waste management, public toilets and car parks which ensure that basic visitor needs are catered for;
- ▶ owns and manages a successful tourist information centre, handling around 220,000 enquiries per year from visitors and local people, and the largest conference centre in the District at Winchester Guildhall;
- ▶ runs a tourism marketing unit whose main annual publication – *The Winchester Visitor Guide* – has been responsible for generating up to three quarters of the bookings received by many local bed and breakfast establishments;
- ▶ supports the development of the arts and sports, often resulting in events which are of great appeal to visitors as well as residents;
- ▶ operates visitor attractions of its own, like museums and leisure centres;
- ▶ devises and promotes visitor products, from self-guided walking trails to special events;
- ▶ cares for parks, open spaces and other public areas;
- ▶ makes planning decisions which can have an important impact on tourism;
- ▶ gives grants, advice and practical support to arts organisations and events such as the Theatre Royal, Hat Fair, Bishop's Waltham and Denmead Festivals and Winchester Festival of Art and the Mind;
- ▶ is the District's licensing authority, issuing licences to taxi drivers, pubs and public entertainment venues.

Even if the City Council did not do some or all of these things, visitors would still come to Winchester. But it is likely that they would come in smaller numbers, find the experience a less enjoyable one and be responsible for increasing damage to the local environment.

In an area such as Winchester it is not possible to 'opt out' of tourism – visitors will always have an impact. The City Council believes that it serves local residents and businesses most effectively by managing and making the best of this situation.

By taking an active role in the promotion, development and management of tourism, the City Council also aims to forge a coherent whole from an industry of many parts, providing a 'corporate' and even-handed approach that no other agency is as well equipped or motivated to provide for our District.



why is a tourism strategy important?

This is a strategy for tourism in the Winchester District, not just for the City Council. The local industry – made up of many players with very different styles and objectives – has no obligation to own it. But we hope they will recognise that this strategy is important as a means of protecting their long term business interests and the well being of our community and our environment. In particular, it:

- ▶ sets out the City Council's own vision for tourism which addresses the needs of the industry, the community and our visitors;
- ▶ provides a framework for and a commitment to doing what is manageable in the pursuit of that vision;
- ▶ maintains the high profile of tourism within the District and ensures that key decision-makers are aware of its importance and potential;
- ▶ ensures that the City Council's resources for tourism are effectively marshalled;
- ▶ eradicates ad hoc policy- and decision-making within the City Council and informs the decision-making of local tourism businesses and partner organisations;
- ▶ underpins the City Council's commitment to Best Value by stimulating continuous improvement in the provision of tourism services;
- ▶ provides a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness, efficiency and value for money of City Council activity in the areas of tourism management, development and promotion.