Chesterfield Visitor Economy Audit

Introduction

This paper provides an audit of Chesterfield's existing visitor product and highlights future development opportunities. The audit has been undertaken with reference to the following headings:

1. Accessibility and Transport
2. Tourist Attractions
3. Accommodation
4. Retail, Food & Drink
5. Entertainment and Culture
6. Sports and Health Related Activities
7. Events
8. Visitor Services, Promotion and Customer Profile
9. Future Infrastructure and Product Development

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the visitor economy, with sectors such as leisure, hospitality and retail disproportionately effected by lockdown and the continuation of social distancing measures. This audit assumes that these measures will come to an end at some point in the future and, as such, has not made specific comment on how the visitor economy might function if such measures were to continue over the longer term.

1. Accessibility and Transport

Chesterfield's central location means that it is easily accessible to a substantial day visit and short break market, with 23 million people living within a two hour drive of the borough. Chesterfield's location on the edge of the Peak District and close proximity to the East Midland's most iconic attraction – Chatsworth House – provides a significant incentive for people to visit the area.

Chesterfield is well connected to the strategic road and rail network. Junctions 29-30 on the M1 provide easy access for north / south traffic on the east side of the country, whilst the A619 (which runs through Chesterfield) provides one of the key access routes into the Peak District. National Express operate regular coach services to Chesterfield, whilst local bus services connect Chesterfield to visitor destinations such as Bakewell and Matlock. However, wider public transport connectivity to visitor attractions away from population centres is limited, for example there is no direct bus link from Chesterfield to Chatsworth House.

Chesterfield rail station is located on the Midland Main Line, providing 2 trains per hour to London with best journey times of less than 2 hours. Cross Country and Northern services also operate through Chesterfield, providing direct connectivity to other regional cities. The future delivery of HS2 services will see journey times to London cut to just over 70 minutes and improved journey times to other destinations on the network. It is anticipated that 50% of journeys on HS2 will be for leisure purposes, opening up new potential markets for Chesterfield.

2. Tourist Attractions

The table below (and map attached as Appendix 1) identifies the main tourist attractions within a 20 mile radius of Chesterfield. This is considered a realistic day travel distance for staying visitors who base themselves in Chesterfield. Visitor numbers to attractions are provided (where available) and attractions are rated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is primarily a local market focus and 5 is a draw to national / international markets.

Attraction	Distance from Chesterfield	Visitor Numbers		Attraction Rating*
		2011	2018 (or latest)	
Chesterfield Borough				
1.Crooked Spire	-		50,000	2
2. Chesterfield Markets (Events)	-		23,000 Christmas lights	1 (2)
3.Chesterfield Museum	-	25,000	26,000	1/2
4.Chesterfield Canal (Tapton Lock Visitor Centre)	2 miles	28,000	31,000	1
5.Revolution House	3 miles	4,000	2,500	1
6. Barrow Hill Roundhouse (Events)	5 miles		30,000	2 (3)
Chesterfield Area (Bolsover, NE Derbyshire)				
7. Sutton Scarsdale Hall	5 miles			1
8.Hardwick Hall	9 miles	177,000	298,000	4
9.Hardwick Old Hall	9 miles	50,000	44,000	2
10.Stainsby Mill	8 miles	14,000	11,000	1
11.Bolsover Castle	8 miles	69,000	101,000	3
12.Renishaw Hall (Gardens)	8 miles			2
12a Matlock Farm Park	8 miles			2
13.Creswell Crags	12 miles	40,000	65,000	2/3
Chesterfield (20 mile radius)				
14. Peak District National Park (countryside/villages/attractions / outdoor activities)	10-20 miles		13m	5
15.Chatsworth House	11 miles	723,000	606,000	5
16. Eyam	13 miles			3
17. Bakewell	13 miles			3
18.Haddon Hall	12 miles	54,000		3
19.Matlock Bath (including Heights of Abraham, Gulliver's Kingdom)	11 miles	200,000 (HoA)		3
20. Cromford Mills (World Heritage Site)	12 miles	100,000		3
21. Crich Tramway Village	13 miles	110,000	144,000	3
22. Wingfield Manor	12 miles			1

23. Castleton	18 miles		Visitor Centre (160,000), Treak Cavern (37,000)	3
24. Sheffield City Centre (retail, theatres, galleries)	12 miles		738,000 (Millennium Galleries)	3
25. Meadowhall	16 miles			3
26. Clumber Park	19 miles		678,000	2
27. Sherwood Forest	19 miles		350,000 (visitor centre)	4
28. East Midlands Designer Outlet	14 miles			3
29. Tropical Butterfly House	18 miles			2
* attraction rating on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is primarily local market focus, 3 is regional focus and 5 national/international market. The higher the figure the broader the market appeal / profile of the attraction.				

Whilst the Crooked Spire is a nationally recognised landmark, tourist attractions in Chesterfield Borough tend to be relatively low key, with primarily local / sub-regional market appeal. This is reflected in the profile of users of Chesterfield's Visitor Information Centre (VIC) with two-thirds local residents and one-third visitors (with only 7% of the total number of visitors on a short break/holiday).

It is estimated that the Crooked Spire receives approximately 50,000 visitors a year (excluding those attending regular church services), with tours (£6 charge) of the Spire itself taking place on weekends throughout the year and on a daily basis from spring through to autumn. Barrow Hill Engine Shed is open weekends only (March to December), but generates the majority of its visitors on the back of a programme of events which can attract rail enthusiasts on a national basis. Chesterfield Canal offers barge rides from Tapton Lock and Hollingwood Hub (with 6,000 people taking boat trips annually), however the majority of people visiting Tapton Lock are using the site for informal recreation (ie walking / cycling on the canal towpath) and therefore most trips are likely to originate in the local area. The canal will require restoration to full navigation before it becomes a more significant draw for visitors.

Whilst Chesterfield Outdoor Market has been included in the list of tourist attractions, this primarily relates to market event days (such as the Medieval Fun Day or the Motor Fest) rather than the weekly market itself, which has seen a significant decline in trader occupancy over a number of years, making it less of a draw for visitors. This is reflected in the declining number of coach day visits to Chesterfield, where the Outdoor Market was previously promoted as a key attraction.

Chesterfield town centre itself is relatively attractive with a large pedestrianised area, a number of listed buildings and an independent retail offer that helps to distinguish it from other destinations. However, from a tourism perspective, the overall town centre offer could be considered to be relatively low key, with in-sufficient 'depth' to encourage large numbers of people to visit or dwell for an extended period.

Within the wider ‘Chesterfield Area’ (covering Bolsover, Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire and the current basis for promotion on the Visit Chesterfield website), there are two significant heritage based attractions in Hardwick Hall and Bolsover Castle. Hardwick Hall (National Trust) is a nationally significant attraction and received 298,000 visits in 2019, an increase of over 65% on the 2011 figure of 177,000. Bolsover Castle, which is owned by English Heritage, received 101,000 visitors in 2019 and also saw a large increase (45%) in visitor numbers over the 2011-19 period. Other attractions in the Chesterfield Area include Creswell Crags (home to Europe’s most northerly example of prehistoric cave art and more recently discovered ‘Witch Marks’) and Renishaw Hall and Gardens, although the Hall itself is accessible only on a limited basis (1 day a week (2 days in August) and guided tours only) and it is the garden itself which constitutes the main attraction.

Extending the catchment geography to approximately a 20 mile radius of Chesterfield brings in the internationally significant destinations / attractions of the Peak District National Park (used by Visit England as one of their ‘attract’ brands for promotion on an international basis), Chatsworth House and Sherwood Forest (Nottingham and Sherwood Forest is also one of Visit England’s attract brands). Chatsworth House is located only 11 miles from Chesterfield and is the single most iconic attraction in the area (and wider East Midlands) with 606,000 paying visitors to the House in 2019 (and significantly more visitors using the grounds for informal recreation). Chatsworth runs an extensive programme of events throughout the year including the international horse trials, country fair and RHS flower show, and these events can generate additional demand for accommodation across the wider area.

Chesterfield sits on the eastern edge of the Peak District (only 5 miles from the national park boundary) and is one of the key gateways into the Park via the A619 Chatsworth / Baslow Rd. The Peak District receives over 13 million visitors a year (2018), based on STEAM Model figures. Eight in ten people are day visitors, reflecting the large population (16 million) that lives within a one hour drive time of the national park. Of the staying visitors, 13% (of total visitors) stay in the park and 5% stay outside the park, whilst 3% are staying with friends and relatives (location not specified) and visit the park on a day trip. The primary reason for people visiting the park is to enjoy the scenery (white and dark peak) and undertake informal recreation activities (for example short walks) as well as a range of outdoor pursuits such as hiking, cycling and climbing. There are a number of attractions in the park which constitute destinations in their own right, for example Bakewell, Castleton, Eyam and the Derwent Dams, however, it is the quality of the wider landscape setting and the number and variety of attractions / recreational opportunities in close proximity to each other that elevates the overall offer to one of national / international significance.

To the east of Chesterfield, Sherwood Forest (and associated attractions such as Clumber Park, Sherwood Pines Forest Park) is a popular destination with 350,000 people making use of facilities at the main visitor centre located just outside Edwinstowe and over 675,000 people visiting Clumber Park. Aside from the Major Oak and Robin Hood association, the Sherwood Forest 'offer' is primarily based around informal recreation opportunities such as walking and cycling. Whilst relative proximity to Sherwood Forest potentially adds to the appeal of Chesterfield as a base for exploration, it is clear that the town's primary positioning is in relation to Chatsworth House and the Peak District.

To the north of the borough, Sheffield city centre could be considered a lower key city break destination, with a relatively strong cultural offer including the Millennium Galleries and the Crucible and Lyceum theatres. The Meadowhall shopping centre also functions as a regional scale retail destination (also the East Midlands Designer Outlet, south of Chesterfield at Junction 28 of the M1).

3. Accommodation

According to the latest STEAM model figures (2018), there were 27 serviced and non-serviced accommodation establishments in Chesterfield providing a total of 1,447 bed spaces as per the table below:

STEAM Model 2018		
	Establishments	Bedspaces
Serviced Accommodation Total	22	1,145
50+ rooms	4	724
11-50 rooms	7	288
< 10 rooms	11	133
Non-serviced Accommodation Total	5	302
Self-catering	4	44
Touring caravans	1	258

All of the accommodation is open on a year round basis.

Hotels provide the majority of visitor accommodation, ranging from the 4 star Casa Hotel and 4 star Ringwood Hall Hotel and Spa, to a mix of the budget providers including the Premier Inn, Travelodge and Ibis hotel chains. The figures exclude the town centre Premier Inn (180+ bedspaces) which opened in the former Co-op department store in April 2019.

According to the D2N2 Visitor Accommodation Strategy (2017), Chesterfield's budget hotels achieved high levels of room occupancy in 2016 (average 83%), with occupancies increasing following the closure of the Chesterfield Hotel in 2015. Midweek occupancies were very high as a result of a mix of local corporate and contractor business, with the chains consistently filling and turning away substantial business on Tuesday and Wednesday nights. They also achieved high Friday and Saturday night occupancies and regularly deny weekend business, particularly on Saturday nights. Weekend markets are primarily people attending weddings and other family events (Chesterfield's central location helps in this regard) and people visiting friends and relatives.

The 4 star hotel market is not as strong in Chesterfield, with occupancies much lower than for budget hotels and achieved room rates below the national average. One hotel trades well during the week, attracting strong corporate demand from Chesterfield and to some extent Sheffield companies, but struggles to attract business at weekends. The other is focused more on leisure markets and attracts strong weekend and midweek weddings business, some midweek and weekend leisure break business, and an element of midweek corporate trade. Residential conferences are a minor market for both hotels (other non-residential conference venues include the Technique Stadium and the Winding Wheel).

The study notes there is some evidence of people staying in Chesterfield hotels to visit Chatsworth and the Peak District, although this appears to be a relatively minor market for the town's hotels. This market positioning is reflected by reference to accommodation provision in Derbyshire Dales (17,800) and High Peak (10,500) which both provide significantly more accommodation than Chesterfield. However, a large proportion of this accommodation is self-catering and camping / caravan provision, with Chesterfield providing one of the highest levels of serviced accommodation in Derbyshire.

Chesterfield only has a small number of self-catering establishments, with the majority of provision at the Poolsbrook Country Park touring caravan site near Staveley. In addition, Airbnb has approximately 15 listings in the Chesterfield area.

4. Retail, Food & Drink

Chesterfield functions as a sub-regional scale retail destination and is the 7th largest centre in the East Midlands. There are over 400 units in the town centre providing a mix of comparison retail, convenience retail, service and leisure uses. There is representation by a number of national multiples alongside local independents, a number of which are located in speciality shopping areas such as the Yards and the Shambles. The Market Hall and Outdoor Market form the centrepiece of the retail area, although occupancy on the Outdoor Market has fallen significantly in recent years and currently stands at an average of 40% across four market days. Chesterfield presently has a lower rate of vacant premises than the national average, however like many town centres it is being adversely affected by changing patterns of consumer and retailer behaviour, with declining footfall and rationalisation of retailer property portfolios resulting in an increasing vacancy rate.

Chesterfield’s food and drink offer is largely comprised of independent cafes, bars and restaurants located mainly in the town centre and along Chatsworth Road and also Sheffield Road. There has been on-going development of the food and drink offer in the last few years, particularly along Chatsworth Road. There is some national chain representation on Alma Leisure Park, adjacent to Cineworld, but generally national chains are under-represented in the borough.

5. Entertainment and Culture

The Council owns and manages two venues in the town centre, the Pomegranate Theatre and the Winding Wheel. These offer a year round programme of plays (including West End shows), concerts, ballet, comedy, films and lectures. Other entertainments include: a 10 screen cinema located on the edge of the town centre at Alma Leisure Park; the Chesterfield Bowl, for 10 pin bowling; and an evening economy in the town centre and along Chatsworth Rd.

The Chesterfield Museum receives around 25,000 visits a year and hosts both permanent and temporary exhibitions / events. The Council’s Percent for Art scheme has seen the completion of over 70 works of art (including the Growth sculpture at a key town centre gateway) and these are located throughout the borough helping to create a distinctive local identity.

6. Sports and Health Related Activities

Chesterfield currently hosts National League football at the Proact Stadium and cricket at Queens Park. The Council operates two leisure centres (Queens Park Sports Centre and the Healthy Living Centre at Staveley) alongside a number of private gym/health clubs. There are 3 ‘borough parks’ (Queens Park, Holmebrook Valley Park and Poolsbrook Country Park) as well as a number of community parks and recreational / play areas offering opportunities for informal recreation. There is also an expanding network of cycle tracks linking into national trails such as the Trans Pennine Trail.

7. Events

Chesterfield plays host to a range of events throughout the year including: the Chesterfield Area Walking Festival; the Chesterfield Festival of Cricket at Queens Park; various events linked to the outdoor market including the Medieval Fun Day, the 1940s Market and the Christmas lights switch-on; Chesterfield Canal Festival at the Staveley Town Basin; the Chesterfield Half Marathon; and the Rail Ale Festival at Barrow Hill Roundhouse.

8. Visitor Services, Promotion and Customer Profile

The Council provides a purpose built Visitor Information Centre (VIC) well located in Rykneld Square adjacent to the Crooked Spire, the town's most iconic landmark. The VIC provides a range of information on local attractions, events, walks etc as well as an accommodation booking service and sale of tickets for local theatres. The VIC typically has around 135,000 customer contacts a year, the large majority comprising visitors to the VIC, with the balance telephone or email contacts. The Centre is primarily a resource for local people, with two-thirds of users being Chesterfield residents. A customer survey completed in 2015 (July to Sept) identified 10% of users as day visitors from outside Derbyshire, 7% as people on a short break / holiday and a further 5% visiting family and friends in Chesterfield. The VIC is open all year round but shows some seasonality of use with a July to November peak and a quieter period December to February.

Chesterfield town centre benefits from extensive carparking provision including the new Saltergate MSCP with secure 24 hr parking. A number of the carparks have visitor orientation boards / map dispensers, and these are also located at the train station, Market Place and Rykneld Square. The town centre is pedestrianised and is relatively easy to navigate on foot, aided by the prominence of the Crooked Spire and a number of finger posts directing people from the main carparks and at key junctions.

Promotion of the local visitor offer is via the Visit Chesterfield website which covers the three districts of Bolsover, Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire. Chesterfield is also promoted via the Destination Chesterfield and the Visit Peak District and Derbyshire websites.

The Visit Chesterfield website received 182,000 unique visitors in 2019/20, a 30% increase over the previous year, even allowing for a tail-off in March 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. The most popular source of visits was Sheffield, followed by London and Chesterfield (see table below – to note the analytics is based on population centres, rather than local authority districts, so generally reflects the views of those living in urban areas rather than the wider population).

Location	Number and % of unique hits
Sheffield	26,400 (14.4%)
London	22,900 (12.5%)
Chesterfield	18,100 (9.9%)
Nottingham	13,600 (7.4%)
Leeds	4,200 (2.3%)
Mansfield	3,500 (1.9%)
Doncaster	3,200 (1.8%)
Birmingham	2,900 (1.6%)

Derby	2,800 (1.5%)
Worksop	2,100 (1.2%)

The top 10 is a mix of mainly local centres but also includes a number of key cities (London, Leeds, Birmingham). This suggests that the website is primarily used as a local resource for information on day trips to the area, with a secondary role as a resource for those potentially considering a short break / longer stay from further afield.

This is reflected in the analytics on individual page hits, with ‘Whats on’ by far the most popular page (after the home page) on the website with 41,700 hits. This is followed by ‘Things to do’ (9,200 hits), whilst ‘Attractions’ (5,600) and ‘Accommodation’ (3,800) also feature in the top 20 page hits, highlighting that the site does play an important role in generating visitor interest in the area.

The majority of source traffic is referred via Google (72%), with 15% going direct to the website and 6% via Facebook. The balance is a mix of other search engines (Bing 2.5%) and referrals from other websites, for example Visit Peak District and Derbyshire (1.2%). Chesterfield Borough Council’s website accounts for 0.13% of referrals and Destination Chesterfield 0.03%.

Whilst Destination Chesterfield is primarily about promoting the town as a business location, the ‘Visiting’ section of the website (which has more of a visitor focus) achieved over 120,000 page views in 2019, although there was only a small number of onward referrals to the Visit Chesterfield site. The Visit Peak District and Derbyshire website references Chesterfield under a number of headings, most prominently under ‘Market Towns’, and also includes a suggested itinerary ‘Castle, Market and Spire’ which uses the town as an overnight base for visits to Bolsover Castle and Hardwick Hall. The website generated over 2,000 referrals to the Visit Chesterfield website in the last year.

The three districts were previously promoted under the brand of the ‘Peak District’s Historic Border Country’. Whilst dated (2006), a visitor survey linked to the promotion of this brand provides a valuable insight into the profile of staying visitors and their motivations for visiting. The survey (based on 400 respondents, with 100 actually visiting the area) found that 77% of visitors were aged 55+, with only 3% aged <44. Most visits (72%) were 2 adults with no children, and 92% of all visits were adults only.

The average length of stay was 4 nights, with 50% staying 1-3 nights and 19% staying 7 nights. 62% stayed in serviced accommodation, with 20% self-catering accommodation, 13% camping/caravanning and 9% staying with friends and relatives. Those staying for short breaks were mainly based in serviced accommodation, whilst longer stays were self-catering. Given the local mix of accommodation, it is reasonable to assume that Chesterfield is primarily a focus for short stays, whilst the majority of longer stays were in North East Derbyshire, which contains most of the self-catering accommodation.

Almost all visits (95%) were made by car, with 19% of visits originating from the North West, 14% from the East of England, 14% from the East Midlands and 11% from Yorkshire and Humber. One of the motivations for visiting (referenced by over a quarter of respondents) was the ‘easy accessibility’ of the location, although on the flip-side, this was also a reason given for not staying in the area, with some respondents seeing it as a day visit destination.

Based on multiple choice, the ten most popular activities undertaken during a visit to the area were as follows:

Visiting the countryside	65%
Eating out	63%
Visiting market towns	52%
Walks up to 5 miles	49%
Visiting historic houses and gardens	46%
Shopping	45%
Town walking	41%
Car touring	38%
Walks over 5 miles	33%
Industrial heritage	19%

Adventure activities (6%) and cycling (4%) were undertaken by only a minority of visitors, probably reflecting both the older age profile of visitors and the small number of parties with children.

In relation to the main activity undertaken during the visit (single choice only) the most popular were:

Walks over 5 miles	21%
Visiting the countryside	15%
Visiting historic houses and gardens	15%
Walks up to 5 miles	13%
Visiting market towns	6%

Walking was the main activity for 34% of visits, with visits to the countryside and historic houses and gardens almost twice of popular as visits to market towns.

In terms of actual places / attractions visited:

Bakewell	56%
Buxton	56%

Peak District National Park	51%
Matlock / Matlock Bath	44%
Chatsworth House	42%
Castleton	33%
Chesterfield Market	20%
Crooked Spire	19%
Hardwick Hall	19%
Sherwood Forest	12%
Bolsover Castle	9%
Creswell Crags	8%
Renishaw Hall	7%
Other	29%

For staying visitors there is a clear tendency to 'look west' with all of the most visited places located in or on the edge of the Peak District. Chesterfield town centre (Market, Crooked Spire) and Hardwick Hall are also popular, however other attractions to the east of Chesterfield received a lower number of visits.

The visitor profile outlined above shows a very strong fit with the category 'Country-loving traditionalists' identified as one of five categories in work undertaken on visitor segmentation on behalf of VisitEngland (see Appendix 2). Country-loving traditionalists are typically empty-nesters with an older age profile and average household income. On holiday they have a preference towards the following activities:

Activity	% (national %)
Explored the countryside	65% (35%)
Explored a small town	57% (39%)
Outdoor leisure pursuits (eg walking, cycling, golf)	38% (26%)
Visited stately home, castle or other historic site	38% (25%)
Visited a garden	28% (18%)
Visited a museum or art gallery	22% (21%)

Country-loving traditionalists are almost twice as likely to explore the countryside as a holiday activity compared to the national average and around 50% more likely to undertake the other listed activities (with the exception of visiting a museum / art gallery which is in line with the national average). This activity profile reflects the core activities undertaken by visitors to the Chesterfield area, although there is perhaps an even stronger local weighting towards outdoor leisure pursuits, specifically walking.

Country-loving traditionalists are most likely to live in the East of England and the South East and have higher than average use of tourism websites (notably National Trust and English Heritage). A better understanding of both our key customer characteristics and core product offer will enable the presentation of a more focused marketing message with the potential to attract a greater number of staying visitors in future.

9. Future Infrastructure and Product Development

Recent investment in the visitor economy has been focused in the town centre ‘Northern Gateway’ area, with the rebuild of the Saltergate MSCP (providing secure 24 hr parking for 526 vehicles) and a new 92 bedroom Premier Inn hotel in the former Co-op department store, both opening in 2019. This represents a significant addition to the town centre hotel stock following the closure of the Chesterfield Hotel in 2015. The conversion of the ground-floor of the Co-op building into a number of leisure units provides an opportunity to strengthen the food and beverage offer in the town centre. Given the well-publicised difficulties faced by a number of national restaurant chains in the last couple of years it seems likely that future occupiers will mainly comprise local chains and independents.

The provision of a high quality public realm will be the key to creating a town centre environment that people enjoy spending time on, either as day visitors or over-night stays. The next phase of the Northern Gateway scheme will see the provision of upgraded public realm, along Elder Way and part of Knifesmithgate and Packers Row. This will improve pedestrian connectivity between the car parks of the Northern Quarter and the retail core, as well as providing scope for outside seating areas for food & beverage uses on Elder Way. In St James Square, the owners of Vicar Lane shopping have added a large outdoor screen and this will be used for advertising, news and public screenings.

As part of its Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield (RHOC) scheme, the Council has secured external funding to support the redevelopment of Chesterfield’s Outdoor Market. Whilst market occupancy has declined significantly in recent years, in part reflecting changing patterns of consumer behaviour, but also the nature of the market itself (layout, utilities provision etc), a functioning market remains central to the town’s core identity either as a ‘historic’ or ‘contemporary’ market town. Given that markets have seen decline on a national basis, a successful market can now provide a real point of differentiation when it comes to attracting visitors, animating a space and providing that vital ‘experience’ that is seen as the key to the future of retailing and retailing places.

The monthly Artisan Market in New Square has shown that a different product offering (with a greater focus on food) can generate increased footfall in the town centre. The market redevelopment will seek to address the limitations of the current layout and deliver a proposal that enables greater flexibility in the future use of Market Place for both markets and events. Also, by consolidating the outdoor market in Market Place, this will provide an opportunity to re-invent New Square as a year-round family orientated events space. This would potentially see the provision of a larger scale (and level) events space that could be used both ‘little and often’ (for example children’s pop-up park) and also better cater for larger events such film screenings, live music and an ice-skating rink at Christmas. Ultimately, the aim is that Market Place and New Square once again become the central focus (and heartbeat) of the town acting as a real draw to residents and visitors alike.

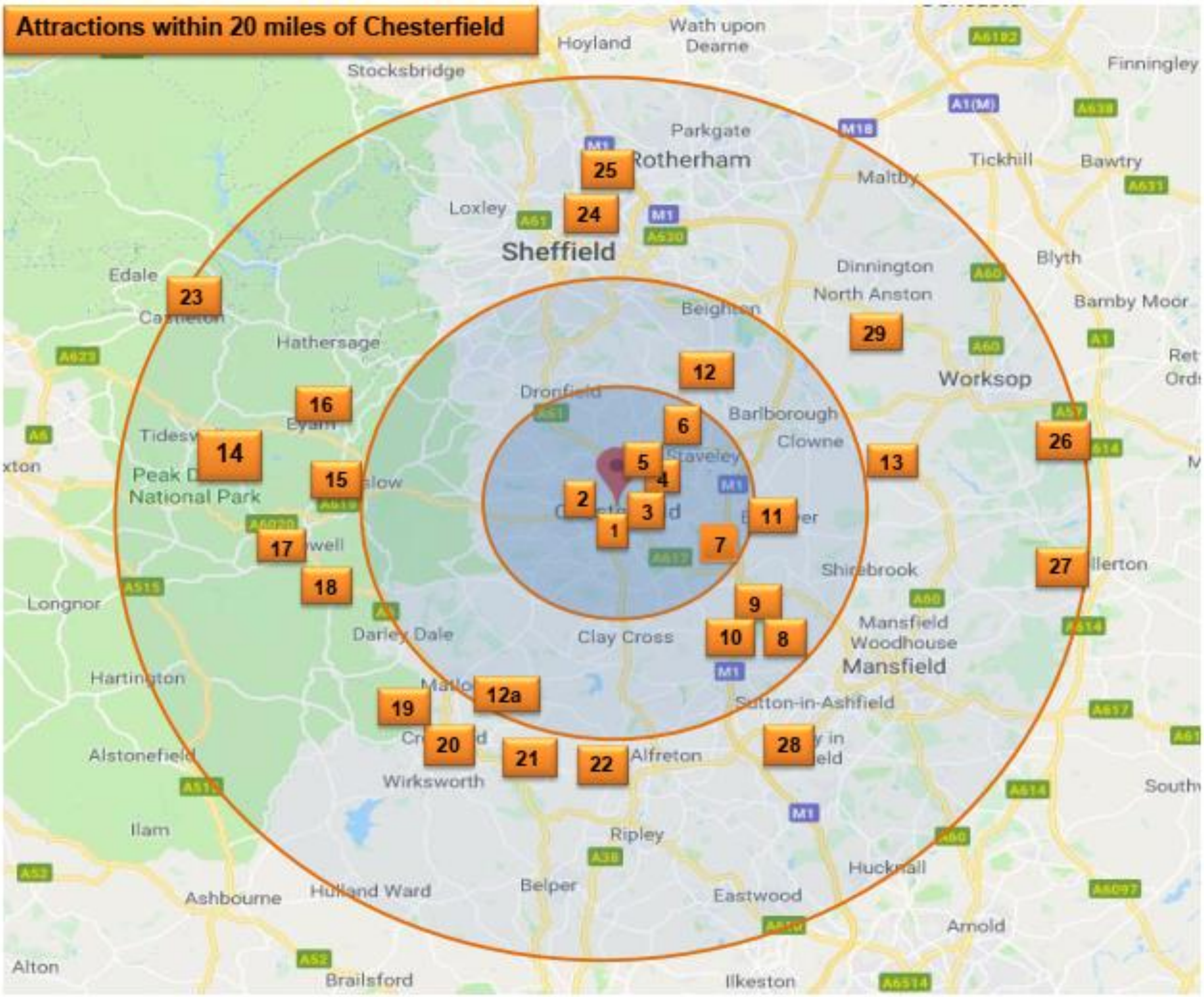
Elsewhere in the town centre, there is scope to develop a ‘cultural quarter’ centred on the Crooked Spire, Chesterfield Museum, Chesterfield Theatres and the VIC. Whilst the Crooked Spire already achieves a notable level of footfall (estimated at 50,000 visitors, excluding attendance at church services), it is considered that the town is still not making the most of its iconic landmark, for example, in relation to its setting and interpretation. Space at the parish church, alongside the proposed refurbishment of the Stephenson Memorial Hall (Chesterfield Museum) and the proximity of the VIC, provide an opportunity to rethink how the story of the Crooked Spire can best be presented.

In terms of industrial heritage, it is anticipated that there will be further development at Barrow Hill Roundhouse, building on the Heritage Lottery funded ‘Moving Forward’ project which saw the construction of a new café, shop and visitor entrance, alongside new interactive displays. There is an on-going programme of investment in Chesterfield Canal to eventually open the 46 mile length to full navigation. Since 1989, 12 miles of the canal have been restored along with 37 locks, 11 bridges and 2 new marinas have been built. The latest section, Hartington Harbour (at Staveley), was opened in 2018. The delivery of the Chesterfield Waterside regeneration scheme will also include a new canal basin (already constructed) providing an attractive terminus to the canal, surrounded by bars and restaurants. The ‘Father of the Railways’ George Stephenson spent the last 10 years of his life living at Tapton House and is buried in Holy Trinity Church in Chesterfield. Whilst he has been recognised with a statue outside the railway station (and in exhibition space at Chesterfield Museum), there is potential to make more of this important local connection.

PEAK will be a year round leisure, education, wellness and entertainment destination set in 300 acres of reclaimed parkland and located in Chesterfield borough and on the edge of the Peak District National Park. PEAK will be delivered in phases with the first development, The Summit@PEAK indoor activity centre, currently under construction and scheduled for opening in 2021. Other phase 1 developments will include: an outdoor watercourse and lake; a covered events space and amphitheatre; 15 km of multi-discipline bike trails; and a fully serviced national park gateway building. A joint venture partnership has been established between Birchall Properties and developer Milligan to take forward the gateway building, working with the Peak District National Park Authority, Derby University and CBC. Market research and promotion is currently being undertaken with a view to finalising the building specification and starting construction in 2021. PEAK has outline planning consent for up to 2,000 hotel rooms and 250 chalets, and will bring forward a significant level of new jobs as the scheme is developed.

The future provision of high speed rail services at Chesterfield station will enhance national rail connectivity (recognising that Chesterfield station is already well connected) and establish Chesterfield as the eastern rail gateway and hub for visits to the Peak District and surrounding attractions. A new masterplan for the station area will deliver a high quality urban realm, including a ‘feature’ bridge providing an appropriate pedestrian gateway to the town centre. The provision of HS2 services will help to underpin future decision making by the private sector, potentially supporting new investment in hotel and leisure development at the station and in the town centre.

Appendix 1 – Attractions Map



Appendix 2 – Visitor Segmentation