



Market Town Welcome

Destination Plan for Haltwhistle

Report To

**One NorthEast, Northumberland Strategic Partnership and
Northumberland Tourism**

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Report From



In Partnership With



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Executive Summary

This Destination Plan for Haltwhistle is an action plan for the whole partnership of organisations that are involved in delivering the visitor experience within Haltwhistle and its hinterlands. It covers the period from March 2008 to 2018 and is designed to be a working document that can be added to as the town and its partners identify new opportunities for development.

The Vision for Haltwhistle is:

- Haltwhistle will have national recognition as the geographical Centre of Britain and the ideal base to explore Hadrian's Wall Country. Visitors enjoy the central location of the town and good transport links to attractions across the north of England and also in Scotland.
- The area will have a national reputation for outstanding walking and cycling opportunities and is cited as an example of 'best practice' in the way the town and its villages provide for the needs of these visitors.
- Visitors can access a range of information on the rich and varied history and heritage of the area from the new visitor facilities within Haltwhistle and local ambassadors who promote the town, its attractions and facilities.

The objectives of this destination plan are:

1. To strengthen Haltwhistle's identity and profile as an attractive visitor destination.
2. To enable the town to better capitalise on the draw of Hadrian's Wall.
3. To encourage existing visitors to Haltwhistle to stay longer and spend more, with the long term aspiration of attracting higher spending holiday makers and broaden the visitor market.
4. To develop a sustainable visitor economy offering excellent service, customer care and value for money.
5. To establish Haltwhistle as a year round destination encouraging short breaks throughout the year.
6. To increase visitor satisfaction levels which will encourage repeat visits and recommendations.
7. To better promote and enable visitors to enjoy the natural and built heritage in and around Haltwhistle.
8. To widen the range and improve the quality of the retail and food and drink offers in the town.
9. To encourage new business investment.
10. To encourage and support collaboration between local organisations and businesses to enable joint delivery of the actions.

The Strategy

Despite being the one of the few towns that is close to Hadrian’s Wall, Haltwhistle recognises that it is not fulfilling its potential as a tourism destination. Hadrian’s Wall attracts many thousands of visitors but only a very small proportion of these make the short journey into Haltwhistle. The town recognises that Haltwhistle currently lacks the attractions or facilities to attract visitors and to keep them in the town. The town is hoping to enhance its tourism offer whilst maintaining its charm and un-commercial nature.

Haltwhistle recognises that it will have to grasp new opportunities to ensure that the town caters for the needs of more demanding visitors. The strategy which the town needs to adopt is to focus on its strengths and unique selling points and to develop and promote these to meet the expectations of the target visitor markets. By strengthening its offer and beginning to shift a little more upmarket Haltwhistle will broaden its appeal, attract more higher-spending visitors and make its visitor economy much more sustainable for the future.

Haltwhistle Destination Priorities

<p>1. Promotion and development of attractions within Haltwhistle</p>	<p>Although Hadrian’s Wall is a major draw for visitors to the Haltwhistle area, only a small proportion of visitors to the Wall make the short journey into Haltwhistle. The town recognises that this could be because there is little to attract visitors to the town. The town therefore wants to build on its strengths to better promote the attractions and activities in and around the town which could entice visitors from the Wall to stay in the area. The Market Town Welcome project has demonstrated that there is a wide range of activities and attractions that can be accessed from Haltwhistle but visitors (and indeed accommodation providers) do not always know what is on offer.</p> <p>In addition Haltwhistle feels that some new attractions and activities could be developed in the town that tell the history and heritage of the area. They envisage small scale developments such as a family history research section in the new library, or utilising an empty shop to interpret the border reiver history.</p>
<p>2. Promotion of Haltwhistle as a walking destination</p>	<p>More could be made of Haltwhistle’s walking credentials; there is a need for better promotion and marketing of the large number of routes and trails that are accessible from the town. In line with this, walkers need to be made more aware of the range of other activities and attractions available in the area to encourage them to stay in the area longer.</p> <p>A concept that Haltwhistle could look to explore to promote itself as a walking destination is to get recognised as a ‘Walkers are Welcome’ town.</p>
<p>3. Development of Haltwhistle as a cycling destination</p>	<p>Work is currently already underway in Haltwhistle to investigate the feasibility of establishing Haltwhistle as a cycling hub. In order for the hub to succeed and bring economic return to the town then it needs to</p>

	<p>be supported by service-providers, properly marketed, and suitably maintained. It will be important that where possible, the town considers the needs of cyclists. Factors such as the provision of route maps, places to buy emergency equipment, secure cycle storage and luggage transfer are all 'service' aspects of developing a cycling hub that Haltwhistle will need to consider if it is to develop a good reputation for cycling and support for cyclists.</p>
<p>4. Better heritage interpretation of Reiver, Border, Religious and Roman history</p>	<p>Hadrian's Wall is clearly the most important heritage feature in the Haltwhistle area, but in addition to Hadrian's Wall, Haltwhistle has a huge amount of history and heritage associated with it – this includes the Romans, the border Reivers, industrial heritage, railways, castles and religion and also a growing market for genealogy and family history research. However, the audit revealed there were little interpretive materials and facilities actually in the town. A strategic approach to all the heritage stories of the town is required to give focus and interest visitors and to help them appreciate the historic townscape. Haltwhistle should consider ways it could tell the long history of the area – either through town trails which pass significant buildings, guided walks or perhaps indoor exhibitions.</p>
<p>5. Increasing the range of eating places available in Haltwhistle</p>	<p>There are opportunities to improve the food and drink offer within the town. Existing cafes, restaurants and pubs could upgrade their food offer, promote their local sourcing and traditional recipes and ensure that the quality of the service is excellent. The town needs to work with the existing eating establishments to try and ensure consistency of service, opening hours and quality, and efforts should be made to increase the range of food on offer in the town. Existing businesses should look to identify opportunities to serve the visitor market as well as local visitors - given the priorities for cycling and walking a 'packed lunch' service would probably be appreciated by these visitors.</p>
<p>6. Appearance of the town</p>	<p>Haltwhistle has a strong historic character with many of the buildings in the town retaining a number of historic features that are particular to the local area. Good maintenance of these historic properties is vital to sustain Haltwhistle's attractiveness as a place to live and visit. The Haltwhistle Partnership is committed to improving the market place and the surrounding buildings, and is currently implementing actions from the Retail Distinctiveness Action Plan. It is important that the Partnership consider whether any actions need revising in the light of the findings of this research.</p>
<p>7. Marketing and Promotion</p>	<p>It is important that Haltwhistle works with Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd to ensure that Haltwhistle is included in wider Hadrian's Wall literature and marketing materials and that its central location on the Wall is emphasised. Currently there is a feeling amongst businesses that the</p>

	<p>Hadrian’s Wall literature has little to say about Haltwhistle.</p> <p>As Hadrian’s Wall is a recognised ‘brand’ and attraction across the UK, Haltwhistle could look for ways of linking marketing for the town into the wider marketing for Hadrian’s Wall and Hadrian’s Wall Country.</p> <p>A promotional idea for the town that capitalises on its ‘Centre of Britain’ status would be to install some art, or a sculpture of some kind to mark the exact location of the Centre of Britain. This would create an additional ‘attraction’ for the area as visitors often like to have a photograph at these locations.</p> <p>Marketing will need to bring all the strengths of the town together to communicate messages to target markets. Events, such as the Walking Festival need better promotion and could raise the town’s profile significantly.</p>
<p>8. Transport and Signage</p>	<p>The town identified that there could be improvements made to the signage in and around Haltwhistle that could enhance visitors’ perceptions of the town. Currently there is little to tell the uninformed visitor to Hadrian’s Wall that the town is less than three miles away, or the facilities that it has for visitors. Equally, many visitors in Haltwhistle do not realise how near they are to the Wall.</p> <p>Visitor parking provision needs to be integrated with the parking needs of the working and residential community and therefore an overall strategy is required. The strategy should encourage more people to use public transport, cycle or walk. Options for visitors include looking at park and walk facilities - reducing the number of cars which enter the centre, or parking on the outskirts could link to the Hadrian’s Wall bus.</p>
<p>9. Community and co-ordination</p>	<p>Haltwhistle recognises that individual residents and businesses within the town have a role to play in terms of improving the tourism product available. Currently there are good relationships between the main community groups, which includes the Haltwhistle Partnership, the town Council, Chamber of Trade and Tourism Association, who have all been involved in this process. However, it has been noted that there could be better joint working between groups – particularly the Chamber of Trade and the Haltwhistle Tourism Association to help progress this Development Plan.</p> <p>Many of the actions and activities that have been identified are around the better co-ordination and promotion of what already exists in Haltwhistle in addition to capital projects. The town is likely to need designated resource in order to carry out this work.</p>

Common Market Town Welcome Themes

The Programme has also identified many ideas for joint working between market towns in Northumberland. The main areas for collaboration include:

- Outdoor activities - walking, cycling, watersports and nature based tourism
- History and heritage
- Food and drink
- Art, culture and events
- Business support and training
- Planning, infrastructure and destination management
- Promotion of investment opportunities

County organisations such as Northumberland Tourism and Northumberland Strategic Partnership can play a key role in facilitating this joint working and leading on county wide initiatives.

1. Introduction

This Destination Plan for Haltwhistle is an action plan for the whole partnership of organisations that are involved in delivering the visitor experience within Haltwhistle and its hinterlands. It covers the period from March 2008 to 2018 and is designed to be a working document that can be added to as the town and its partners identify new opportunities for development.

The purpose of the plan is to:

- help develop the tourism potential of Haltwhistle and strengthen its identity for visitors.
- encourage the cross fertilisation of ideas and identify the top priorities for action.
- provide a framework and rationale for investment and development planning in the tourism sector within the town, including harnessing private sector potential.
- help to clarify how partners and agencies can work together to map out a way forward for the next few years.

1.1. Background to the Project

Miller Research in partnership with Alison Caffyn Research Consultant and AMT-I were commissioned by One NorthEast, Northumberland Tourism and Northumberland Strategic Partnership to develop a destination plan model which could be applied to market towns within the region. The project has been run in six market towns in Northumberland: Berwick, Alnwick, Amble, Seahouses, Haltwhistle and Wooler. All the towns except Berwick have recently conducted a study into developing their retail distinctiveness and competitiveness. This work highlighted the growing importance of tourism to each town, and the destination plans now aim to complement the retail work and highlight the towns' tourism potential.

It is important to focus on tourism as the visitor economy has become, and will continue to be, an important economic sector, particularly for rural areas. The tourism sector employs a high proportion of local people and contributes directly or indirectly to a large part of the local economy. Recent research (STEAM 2006) estimates the impact of tourism in Northumberland:

- **Northumberland receives 1.8 million overnight tourists**, spending **6.6 million nights** in the area, plus **8 million day visits**.
- Overnight visitors spent £248 million; day visitors spent a further £142 million, plus indirect revenue of £228 million giving a total contribution of tourism to the Northumberland economy of **£621 million**.
- Approximately **11,400 jobs** (full time equivalents) were supported by direct tourist expenditure, a further **2,650 jobs** were supported by indirect revenue.

Tourism not only supports businesses, jobs and suppliers but it is particularly significant in rural areas and market towns where:

- Visitors help support local heritage, culture and community services.
- Tourism is a reason to conserve special buildings, historic sites, beautiful landscapes and important wildlife sites.

- Tourism is a vital element in regenerating an area.

1.2. Strategic Context

The North East England Tourism Strategy (2005-10) identifies regional objectives including increasing the number of UK and overseas visitors year round and increasing visitor spend. The strategy aims to deliver increased employment, productivity and investment in tourism whilst increasing visitor satisfaction and conserving the region's natural, heritage and cultural assets. It identifies market towns as key elements in the attraction of the North East for visitors and proposes that towns should develop plans to make improvements in facilities to meet the needs of increased visitors. It highlights the potential for making more of regional food, improved shopping and public art as well as basics such as visitor information and signing. Studies have also been recently completed into developing cruise tourism along the North East coastline and into the potential for making more of events and festivals.

At a County level the key document is the Northumberland Area Tourism Management Plan. It presents the Tourism Vision for Northumberland as:

“To establish the County as the premier rural destination in the UK, balancing the needs and expectations of the international and UK visitor, businesses and communities whilst protecting and further developing the County's exceptional environment and rich cultural heritage”.

It highlights particular challenges for the County, such as the seasonality of tourism which impacts on the economy, jobs, cash flow and investment, and the relatively poor food and retail offer for visitors compared with other areas. The Plan identifies objectives including developing a higher profile for Northumberland, encouraging new sustainable tourism businesses and a more entrepreneurial culture which will help increase jobs, skills, investment and safeguard local services such as shops, pubs, museums and so on.

1.3. Process and Partnership

The team researched good practice from amongst other UK regions and market towns to identify the best way to develop a market town destination plan. A template or process was developed which aimed to be as inclusive as possible by developing a local Leadership Group in each town which involved tourism businesses and local organisations as well as the town Development Trusts, Local Authorities and tourism agencies. The template (see Appendix 1 for the full model) works through the following stages, which also help structure this destination plan:

1. Understanding the rationale - why welcome visitors, what are the benefits for a town?
2. Identifying current and future visitors to the town.
3. Identifying what the town can offer visitors.
4. Considering how well the town meets the needs of its visitors now and in the future.
5. Understanding how tourism is resourced, promoted and managed in the town.
6. Understanding the town's strengths and weaknesses.
7. Creating a vision of where the town wants to be in 5 – 10 years from a visitor perspective.
8. Identifying priorities and actions in order to achieve that vision.

The process has also incorporated the principles of the 'VICE model' for local destination management. This model was developed by the national tourism agencies and Tourism Management Institute to encourage the sustainable development of tourism. It aims to ensure positive outcomes for Visitors, the tourism Industry, local Communities and the built and natural Environment. So the destination plans aim to develop tourism which:

- Welcomes, involves and satisfies **Visitors**
- Achieves a prosperous and profitable **Industry**
- Engages and benefits host **Communities**
- Protects and enhances the local **Environment**

The Haltwhistle Destination Plan has been produced through a number of meetings that were held in the town involving key regional and local agencies and local businesses and residents. This included an open workshop to which all tourism related businesses were invited. Appendix 2 lists the people and organisations that have helped to design and shape this Plan.

A Leadership Group was convened for Haltwhistle which is made up of public, private and community representatives. The Leadership Group are responsible for leading the Market Town Welcome project and will be responsible for implementing the actions listed in this plan.

In addition to the meetings and workshops, the process has been supplemented by an online business survey of tourism businesses (including accommodation providers, attractions and indirect providers such as restaurants and retailers), a tourism audit of the town and a review of other relevant research including the 2003 Visitor Survey for Haltwhistle¹ and visitor segmentation work undertaken for One NorthEast in 2007/08².

The following meetings were held in the town that have helped to develop this Plan:

1. Meeting of the Leadership Group – the group were presented with information and evidence about the town and its tourism offer. This information was obtained from the business survey and town audit that were carried out specifically for the Market Town Welcome project and previous research that had been conducted. The group used the information to start to develop a SWOT analysis of tourism provision in the town.
2. Town Workshop – a workshop was held in the town which was open to anyone with an interest in tourism development in Haltwhistle. The group were asked to add to and amend the SWOT produced by the Leadership Group, help to identify current and future visitors, develop a vision of the town from a tourism perspective and start to identify actions to move towards this vision.
3. Action Planning Session – the Leadership Group met to finalise the vision for the town and to prioritise the opportunities and actions that had emerged from the previous sessions.

¹ Haltwhistle Visitor Survey 2003 - Northumberland Market Towns Benchmarking Project (March 2004) Northumbria Tourist Board

² Marketing North East England (February 2008) Arkenford Ltd

2. Vision and Objectives

2.1. Vision

The Vision for Haltwhistle is:

- Haltwhistle will have national recognition as the geographical Centre of Britain and the ideal base to explore Hadrian's Wall Country. Visitors enjoy the central location of the town and good transport links to attractions across the north of England and also in Scotland.
- The area will have a national reputation for outstanding walking and cycling opportunities and is cited as an example of 'best practice' in the way the town and its villages provide for the needs of these visitors.
- Visitors can access a range of information on the rich and varied history and heritage of the area from the new visitor facilities within Haltwhistle and local ambassadors who promote the town, its attractions and facilities.

2.2. Objectives

The aims of this destination plan are:

1. To strengthen Haltwhistle's identity and profile as an attractive visitor destination.
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9. To encourage new business investment.
10. To encourage and support collaboration between local organisations and businesses to enable joint delivery of the actions.

3. Visitors to Haltwhistle

3.1. Visitor Survey

In 2003, a Destination Benchmarking Survey 2003 was undertaken in Haltwhistle by the Northumbria Tourist Board as part of the Northumberland Market Towns Benchmarking Project.

The research was designed to provide an up-to-date information base on the profile of tourism in Haltwhistle and is the latest data available that is just focused on Haltwhistle. The survey followed a standard methodology which has allowed comparisons to be made with other destinations, including Market Towns in Northumberland, Market Towns nationally and other destination types (towns/cities, historic cities and resorts).

A total of 230 face-to-face interviews were conducted with visitors in Haltwhistle during the summer of 2003. Interviews were carried out on a random basis in various locations throughout Haltwhistle including the Market Place, outside the TIC, outside the Co-op and outside Truly Scrumptious.

Some useful data regarding visitors to Haltwhistle included:

- The majority of respondents to the visitor survey in Haltwhistle (52%) were staying overnight elsewhere, and visiting Haltwhistle for the day.
- Only 26% of visitors were staying within the town.
- The average size of groups visiting Haltwhistle was 2.42 people, which was slightly lower than the average for other destinations participating in the Benchmarking Scheme.
- 81% of all respondents to the survey in Haltwhistle were adult only parties, the most common group composition of visitors in Haltwhistle being of two adults (62% of all respondents).
- The town attracts older visitors with 45% of respondents being 45 -64. Only 4% of visitors were aged 16 – 24.
- The town attracts a high proportion (64%) of visitors from the higher ABC1 socio-economic group.
- The proportion of visitors making their first visit to Haltwhistle was high, at 47%.
- Haltwhistle had a lower proportion (53%) of repeat visitors compared to the average for all Northumberland Market towns (71%).
- 89% of all visitors were from within the UK, including 28% from within the Northumbria region.
- 11% of visitors came from overseas.
- 86% of respondents were visiting Haltwhistle for holiday or leisure purposes, 11% were visiting friends and relatives and 3% were making a special shopping trip.
- Shopping and sightseeing were key motivators - 28% of visitors said the main reason for their trip was shopping, and 25% said it was sightseeing.

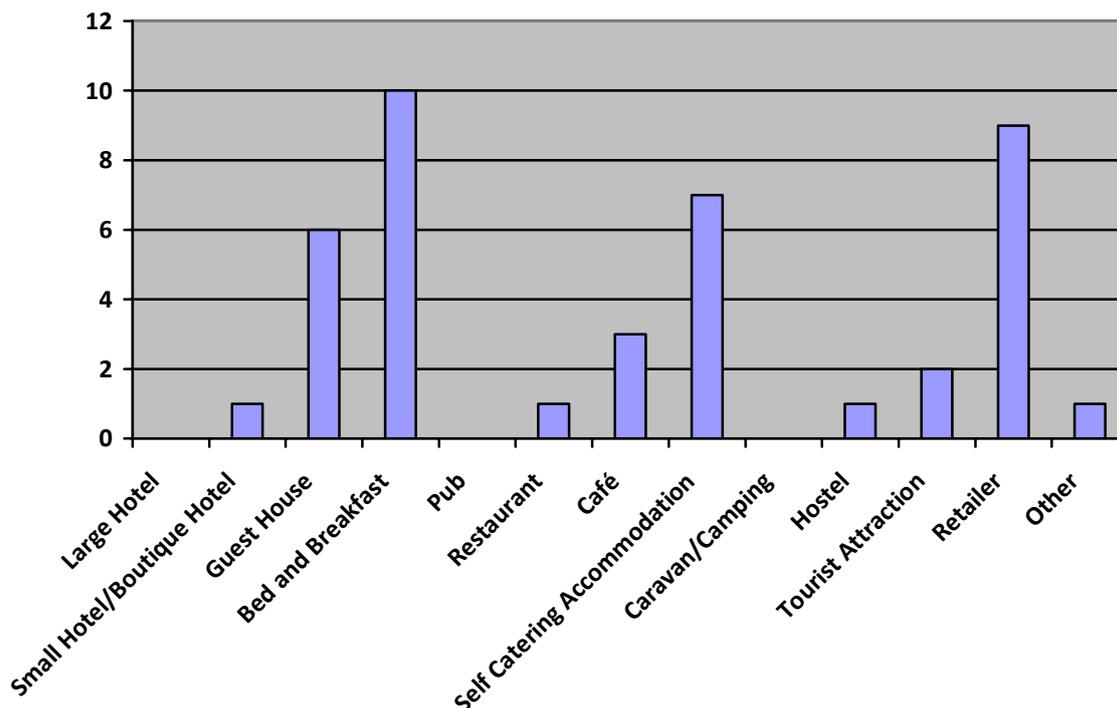
- Visitors to Haltwhistle tended to stay in low cost accommodation. Only 27% stayed in serviced accommodation.
- The average length of stay in the town was 1.42 hours for day visitors, which was below the average for other destinations.
- For overnight visitors, the average length of stay was 5.94 nights – less than the Northumberland average but slightly longer than the national average for Market Towns. People staying in self catering accommodation tended to stay longer than those in serviced accommodation.
- The most popular feature of a visit to Haltwhistle was the friendliness of the local people. The sense of peace and quiet and the general atmosphere of the town were also well liked.
- Dislikes about Haltwhistle focused on the weather, shops and cafés/restaurants. Specific comments relating to shops included opening hours, lack of craft shops and lack of children’s clothes shops. Comments were also made relating to places to eat and drink related to the availability and quality of eating establishments.
- The overall average expenditure per person per day for all visitors was £16.24, which was significantly lower than in other market towns or cities/resorts.

It should be noted that the survey data is now five years old and so some of the findings from the 2003 work may now be out of date. However in general, attendees at Market Town Welcome meetings felt that most of these findings would hold today. The business survey (see sections 3.2 and 4.2) also reports on visitor attitudes and opinions and provides a more up-to-date picture of tourism in the town although it must be remembered that visitors were not surveyed directly and also the sample is much smaller than the 2003 work.

3.2. Business Survey

As part of this study a business survey was available on-line and in hard copy for local businesses who have dealings with the visitor market to complete. The purpose of the business survey was to identify current tourism issues that businesses are aware of and also if there are any opportunities to develop the appeal of the town. They were also able to comment on visitors’ likes and dislikes and what will encourage visitors to stay longer or spend more. Further results are included in Appendix 3.

Within Haltwhistle, 32 businesses completed the business survey; responses were received from a good range of businesses which included B&B providers, Self-catering accommodation and retailers.



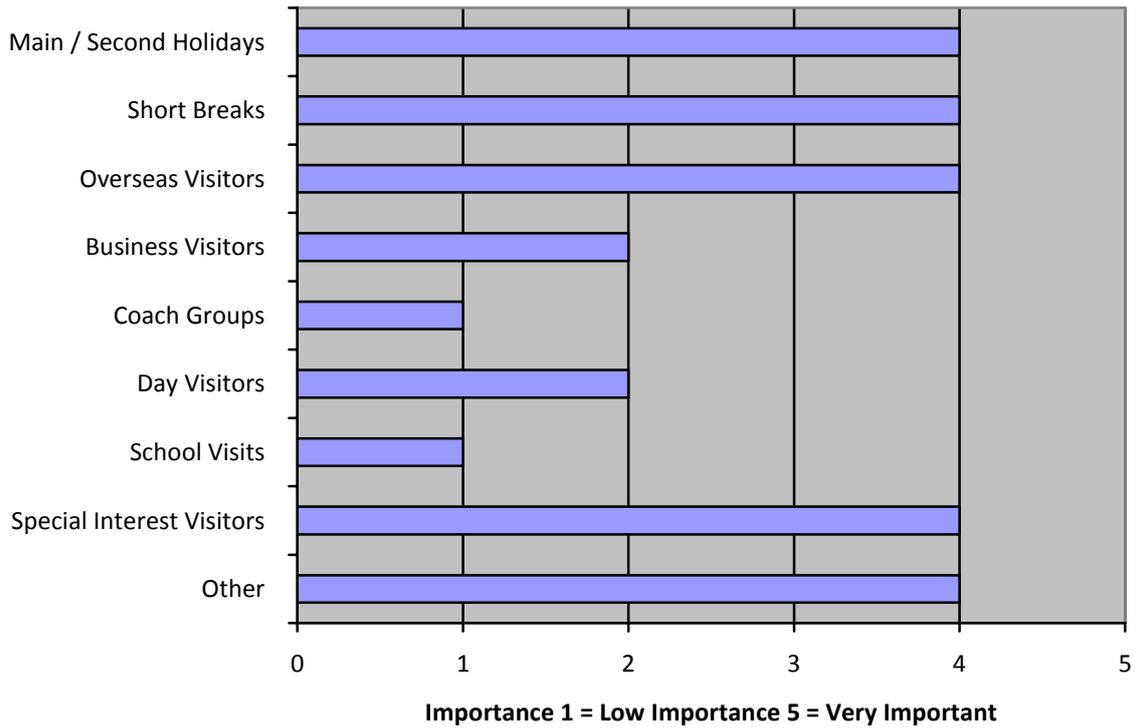
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 30 respondents

Nearly 80% of businesses are open all year with the remainder closing through some of the winter months (September – March). Nearly all of the businesses would like to see an increase in business during the winter months, in particular during the November to March period. A small proportion of businesses were also looking to increase business over the summer.

On the whole businesses in Haltwhistle were reportedly healthy with the majority of businesses indicating that profitability has increased over the last three years.

Visitors to Haltwhistle

In terms of the visitors to Haltwhistle, businesses ranked those on their main or second holidays, short breaks, overseas visitors and special interest visitors as the most important for their business. The town is not attracting business visitors, coach groups, day visitors or school visits to the same extent, although this may be indicative of the types of businesses who completed the survey (e.g. accommodation providers would not rank day visitors as important)

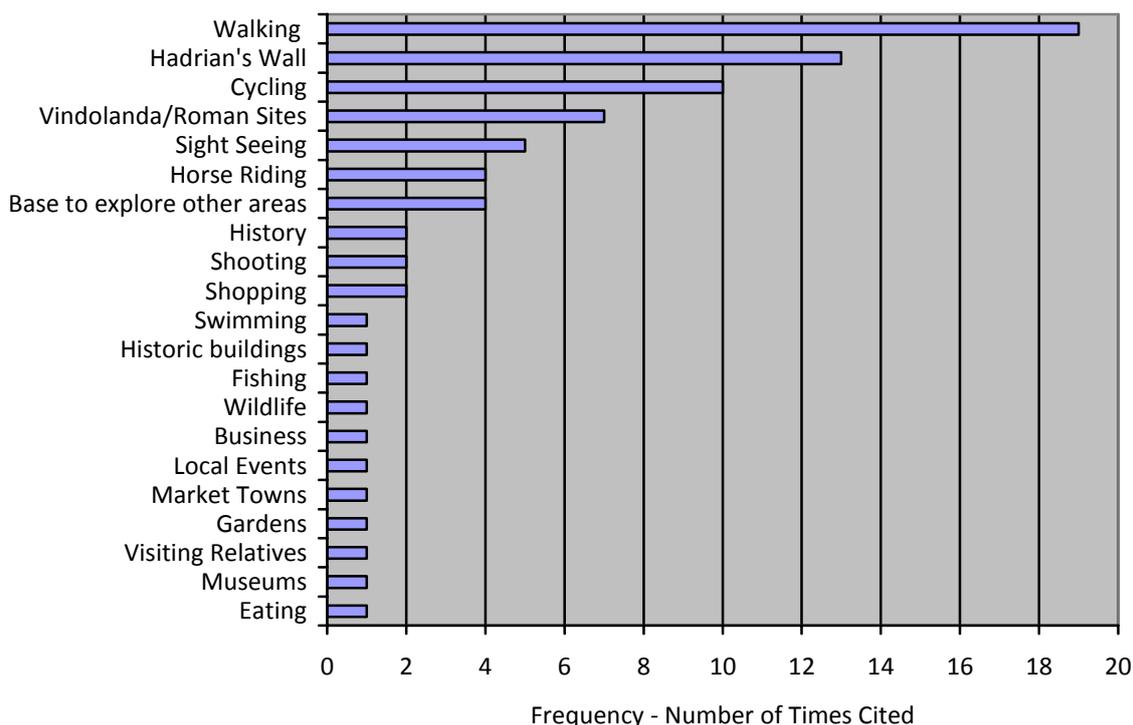


Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 26 respondents

Activities Undertaken

Businesses were asked what activities visitors to Haltwhistle undertake whilst they are in the area. The chart below indicates the number of times an activity was mentioned within the survey.

Figure 1: Activities undertaken by visitors to Haltwhistle



Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. Base 25 respondents

It is clear that the major motivators to a trip to Haltwhistle are Hadrian’s Wall, walking and cycling and the heritage associated with the area. Hadrian’s Wall is a major draw for visitors with many wanting to ‘walk the wall’. In addition to this there are also a number of visitors who are interested in the history of the area and are involved in visiting Roman sites or more actively involved in digs at Vindolanda. However, it has emerged during the sessions within the town that there are limited numbers of visitors to the Wall who then spend any time within the town.

Outdoor activities such as cycling and riding are also popular activities.

3.3. Segmentation – Visitor Profiles

In 2007 One NorthEast commissioned Arkenford to profile and segment visitors and non-visitors to the North East of England. The research used three segmentation models: the ArkLeisure Segmentation, a bespoke behavioural segmentation and a socio-demographic segmentation (CAMEO). The full report gives very detailed results for the North East and Northumberland and includes interesting information of the perceptions of actual and potential visitors to the area.

It was recognised that the regional research by Arkenford may not necessarily reflect the local trends and visitors that are currently coming to Haltwhistle. Therefore an exercise was carried out during the town workshop to identify which of the ArkLeisure segmentation profiles of visitor are currently visiting the town. There was a consensus that the *current* visitors to Haltwhistle were generally:

- **Functionals** – self reliant; price driven; value function over style; traditional values, but interested in new experiences; not risk averse. Within the Haltwhistle workshop exercise our functional couple were called Brian and Susan and were travelling with their dog³
- **Habituals** – Largely inactive; low spending group; very traditional; strongly resistant to change; risk adverse; value relaxation, peace and quiet. Our habitual couple were Frank and Brenda.
- **Traditionals** –Self reliant; internally referenced; slow to adopt new options; strong orientation towards traditional values; value individual attention and service. Our traditional couple were Robert and Hilary.

There are some groups which cut across the segmentation model. The following were seen as important visitors for Haltwhistle:

- **Walkers** - a large rural visitor market. While many walkers and hikers stay in accommodation in the countryside, a town location appeals to many for the evening and alternative facilities. The range of walking and cycling opportunities around Haltwhistle mean that the needs of this market should be borne in mind.
- **Families** – in the segmentation model any group can include families. Although the 2003 visitor survey identified that family groups were a low proportion of visitors to Haltwhistle, the Leadership Group felt that families represent an important market for the town
- **Overseas visitors** – although overseas visitors were not formally included in the segmentation model, 11% of visitors to Haltwhistle are from outside of the UK so this destination plan needs to consider how best to meet their needs and expand this market.

³ More detailed information on each of the segments can be found in Appendix 4.

4. The Tourism Offer

It is important to have a full understanding of what Haltwhistle has to offer visitors. This includes both what current visitors like and dislike about the town and also what the town has that could attract new and different types of visitors. To get a fuller understanding about Haltwhistle a comprehensive audit of the town was carried out which included a quantitative element (a physical count of what is available) and a qualitative element (quality scoring the provision). In addition to the audit, the business survey included questions which would help to understand what the town's appeal is to visitors and any feedback about the town businesses receive from visitors.

4.1. Town Audit

As discussed above a town audit of Haltwhistle was undertaken in February 2008 which covered a range of services and facilities that visitors look for and appreciate. The audit looked to help the town appreciate its current offer and interest to visitors and also identify any problems, gaps or potential areas for further development. A full breakdown of the audit is included in Appendix 4, whilst the following section highlights the strengths and gaps present in the town.

The audit revealed that there are 61 accommodation providers in the Haltwhistle area. Most bedspaces are provided through B&B's and Guesthouses. Currently there is only one hotel in the town which has 26 bedspaces. The other major providers of accommodation are the six camping and caravanning sites which have 312 pitches between them. About three-quarters of the accommodation is officially quality rated.

In terms of the gaps in accommodation, it was felt that there could be a need for a second hotel – perhaps one that is large enough to accommodate a coach party of visitors.

Haltwhistle has a number of attractions in and around the town. Many of the attractions are either linked to the history of the area (e.g. Featherstone POW camp, Vindolanda) or the natural beauty/scenery of the area (e.g. Allenbanks, Greenlee Lough and Haltwhistle Burn).

All of the attractions have been rated a quality score of either 3 (moderately good, meets most visitors' needs) or a 4 (good, meets visitors' expectation and an asset to the area).

In terms of gaps in attractions, it was felt there is a need for some more indoor attractions that could keep people in the town if the weather was bad.

Haltwhistle has a number of events throughout the year; this includes the annual walking festivals, held in Spring and Autumn each year and the Sights and Sounds festival in September. In addition there is a Roman Market every month between March and September, a plant festival and the Haltwhistle Carnival. The events and festivals cover the period April – October. It was felt that there is a gap in activity over the winter months between November and March and also more could be done around arts and crafts which would be of interest to visitors

There are a range of retail outlets in Haltwhistle. Two of the retailers, Billy Bell and Newcastle Book Shop are rated 5 on the quality scale (very good, exceeds visitor's expectations, is a draw for visitors in itself), whilst the rest of the retail shops are scored either 3 or 4.

There is a weekly market in Haltwhistle held on a Thursday, however this was not deemed to be of interest to visitors and scored a 1 on the quality ranking (not suitable for visitors - you would not advise visitors to use/visit).

In terms of gaps, it was felt there is a need for more gift/craft shops which would be of interest to visitors, particularly if they specialised in local products and merchandise.

Only two shops are open on a Sunday or in the early evening (5pm – 7pm). Around 40% of the shops observe half day closing on a Wednesday afternoon. However, it was noted by members of the Leadership Groups that many shops keep 'quirky' opening hours and often close early or close for a day randomly.

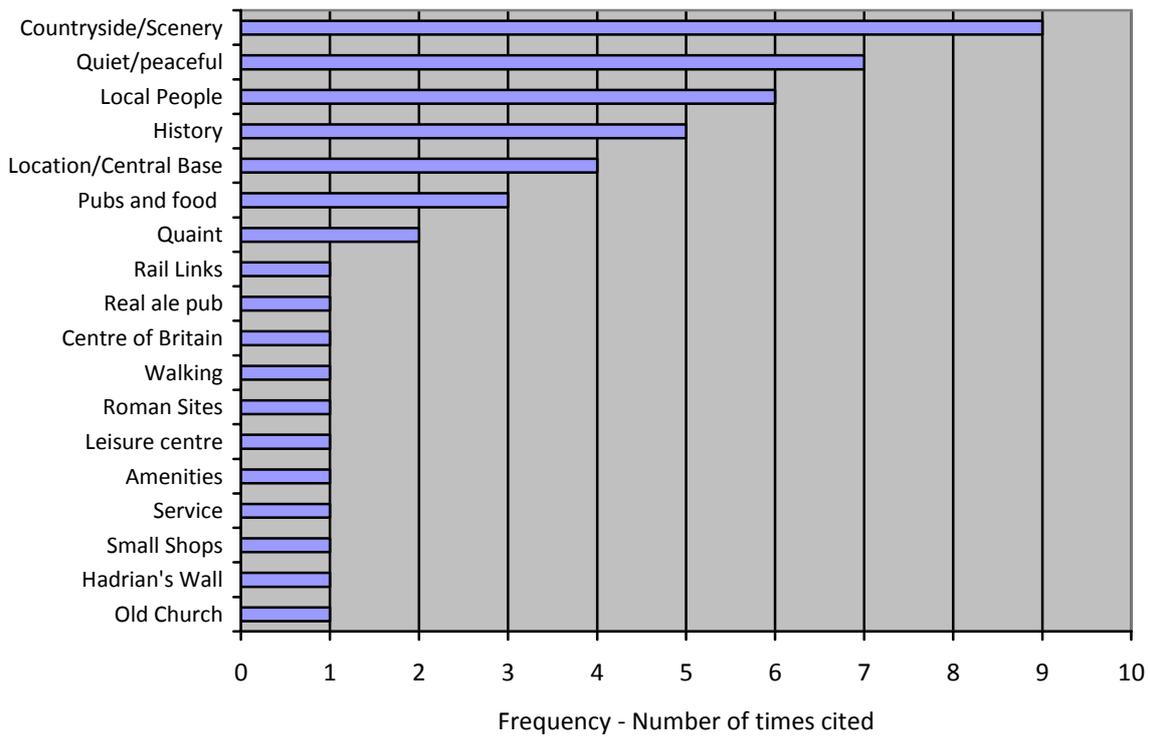
There are currently thirteen eating establishments in the town - two restaurants, three takeaways, four café's and four pubs serving food. Of the thirteen, five have been given a quality score of 4. The remainder are split between scores of 2 and 3. One establishment was rated a 1.

Around half of the eating establishments are open on a Sunday, but only three are open in the early evening (between 5pm and 7pm). Some of the café's close all day on a Wednesday. It was noted by the participants in the town meetings that there is a very poor early evening offer of food with it generally being limited to the takeaways or pubs. The audit suggested there was a need for more (good quality) evening food provision in the town, either through a bistro of some kind or a more 'foodie' pub (similar to how the Black Bull used to be prior to it being taken over by Scottish and Newcastle brewery). It should be noted that in the course of preparing this destination plan that the Pillar Box cafe is now open in the evenings from Friday to Monday.

4.2. Business Survey

The business survey asked respondents what feedback they get about the town from visitors in terms of their likes and dislikes. It is interesting to see that there are some themes that continue to come through from the 2003 survey. In general visitors like the stunning scenery and countryside around Haltwhistle and the peace and quiet. Also important to note is that many respondents cited the friendliness of the local people as something that was appreciated by their visitors.

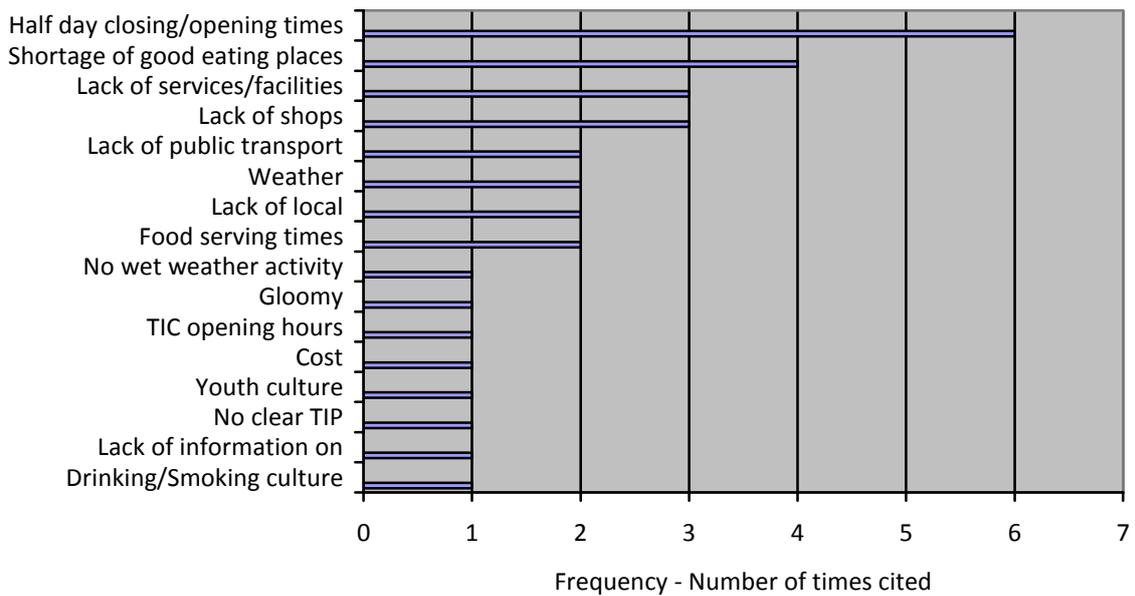
Figure 2: What visitors like about Haltwhistle



Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. Base 24 respondents

The main dissatisfaction for visitors was regarding the opening times of shops and eating places. Many respondents commented that their visitors did not like the 'quirky' opening hours that many shops keep, or the difficulties experienced in finding somewhere still serving food. Other dislikes were the lack of good quality eating establishments, lack of services/facilities and linked to this the limited shopping experience.

Figure 3: What Visitors Dislike about Haltwhistle



Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. Base 22 respondents

Possible Improvements

The business survey asked respondents what kind of improvements or developments they would like to see in the town in order to attract more visitors or keep current visitors in the town for longer. The list below highlights the responses from the business survey, a fuller discussion of potential developments is presented in section 6.

- Shop front improvements with better signs.
- A better range of local/Fairtrade/organic supplies.....a good deli
- Shops that are open all day/ Shops open on Wednesday and Saturday
- Quality places to eat and open every day.
- Get one vision for town i.e. brand Haltwhistle the Centre of Britain and promote that with some gifts just from Haltwhistle. Public art/sculpture to mark the Centre of Britain.
- Clearing of large groups of smokers and drinkers from congregating on the main street outside pubs intimidating visitors.
- More frequent trains and buses
- Quality ambiance similar to Corbridge.
- Floral decorations in the town and surrounding villages and better maintenance of grassed roadside areas along entrances to town.
- Decent bakery.
- Improved signage and parking and infrastructure e.g. toilets.
- A local indoor attraction e.g. museum, visitor centre.
- A good market.
- All traders to work together to promote a unique environment and atmosphere for Haltwhistle.
- Fill all the vacant shops with locally sourced goods e.g. food, crafts etc.
- An Italian restaurant and decent deli would be a great idea.
- More leisure facilities for rainy days.

Promotion of Haltwhistle

Suggestions received from businesses regarding the marketing and promotion of the town included comments about current and future promotion of Haltwhistle.

- Hadrian's Wall publicity has little to say about Haltwhistle.
- We used to have a county council guide it was VERY good, there were many bookings through this "Hadrian's Wall Country" book. It has gone and it has had a huge negative impact. We need it back.

- No publicity around the Centre of Britain and the locational advantages of the town.
- There needs to be consolidation of the number of visitor guides for Northumberland/more co-ordinated
- Haltwhistle doesn't seem to be on the maps for tourists. Most seem to go to Hexham, Corbridge or Carlisle or Penrith.
- Could Haltwhistle become like Corbridge - Good quality shops, nice coffee shops, etc
- Emphasise the close proximity to all the best parts of Hadrian's Wall, best Forts & Museums and central location for touring Northern England & Borders all from one base.
- Any attempt to increase tourism must be tackled sensitively to avoid spoiling what is at present its major asset.
- Haltwhistle needs an 'attraction' to draw visitors, even a Farmers Market would help.
- Talk about quality provision, excellent hosts and superb local foods. Out of season ideas of things to do. List things which would appeal to families and disabled visitors.
- Perhaps if the town was open for business over the weekend this would help
- A lot of emphasis is put on "walking the Wall" or the Pennine Way. This encourages a lot of "single night" occupancy and low spend in this area. Many visitors comment that they wish they had realised that there is a lot to see in this particular part of the county and that they should have allowed more days to stay here.

Other Comments

There were some other comments received from some businesses about the town and its appeal to visitors:

"Haltwhistle is a dreary town which should be twinned with Royston Vasey. It boasts to be the centre of Britain but it should say this with a big bang and have a monumental sculpture built within sight of the A69. Something dramatic such as a giant thunderbolt. This would put Haltwhistle on the map and give it the shake-up which this dump badly needs."

"Too much of an increase in tourism will inevitably, by its very nature, destroy what the people who come to Haltwhistle come here for."

4.3. SWOT

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis has been carried out for the town of Haltwhistle and its surrounding villages from a tourist perspective. The SWOT has been completed using the results of the business survey and town audit, and exercises conducted at the town meetings and workshops.

Strengths

- Hadrian's Wall within walking distance
- Variety of local shops
- Leisure centre
- Transport links

- Walking and cycling opportunities nearby
- Walking festival
- Free parking
- Architecture and appearance of the town
- Strong heritage
- Railway station
- Geographic Centre of Britain
- Co-op closes at 10pm every night (even on a Sunday)
- Very strong community
- Proximity to Northumberland National Park and North Pennine AONB
- Location on the junction of Pennine and Hadrian cycleways

Weaknesses

- Not much accommodation
- Poor food offer
- Opening times of shops
- Pubs not open 7 days and don't offer food 7 days
- Taxis (availability in the evening)
- Co-ordination of public transport links
- Lack of wet weather/indoor attractions
- No 'centre' for Hadrian's wall
- No information on local history e.g. museum
- Nowhere to go for an evening meal
- Visitors pushed to find something to spend their money on e.g. no craft shops, galleries etc
- Poor marketing of the town and what it has on offer
- Reputation of a drinking culture
- Parking problems
- Some café's close all day on Wednesday
- No bistro style food on offer
- Little evening entertainment other than pubs
- Bike racks not well supplied or signposted

Opportunities

- Build identity around the Centre of Britain
- There is more than the wall – strong heritage
- Reivers
- Cycling (mountain biking, downhill biking)
- Need an improved town website – more information
- Orientation visits for local accommodation providers
- Information boards in National Park to promote the town
- Better communications
- Joint working/meetings between Tourism association and Chamber of Trade
- Rail heritage – better promotion when steam trains come through the town
- Future development and promotion of the market that the Chamber of Trade is starting on a Saturdays
- Better town marketing, change perceptions, draw in the villages and farms outside of the town

- Gift and craft shops?
- More accommodation – maybe a second hotel
- Outdoor activities
- Better information on history and heritage
- Better signage to Hadrian's Wall – it is less than 3 miles walking.
- The potential tourism development the other side of the bypass
- Heritage centre
- More indoor attractions/activities for wet weather days
- Activity holidays
- Farm visits
- Film Circuit – evening entertainment
- The Riverbank is a potential park/picnic area
- Statue in the market place - border reiver/roman centurion - create a focal point
- Better promotion of the swimming pool
- Better marketing of visitor attractions
- Better promotion of town activities and events that tourists would like to come to
- Encourage town groups to put on talks and fun things in summer evenings
- Better information boards on all major 'gateways' into the town
- Improved transport - community transport bus?
- Local Tourism Think-tank
- Employ a tourism co-ordinator on a long term (5 year) contract
- Develop the town as famous for eco-tourism and encourage businesses to be as environmentally friendly as possible
- Training and grants to help businesses disabled friendly
- Training for tourism providers on the history, geology, wildlife etc. in the area "know your Haltwhistle Country"
- Support for businesses - start up, developments, subsidies
- Local Food seriously used and promoted
- Fairtrade Town
- Need quality eating establishments
- Wider range of eating establishments
- Longer opening hours in café's/restaurants
- Bistro?
- Painting

Threats

- Few come down into Haltwhistle – they just stay at the Wall
- Apathy and Cynicism over whether anything will happen through this process
- Rents and rates
- Resources (people's time and financial)
- Confusion over the identity of the town – Gateway to Hadrian's Wall, Centre of Roman Britain, Centre of Britain etc.
- Increased competition for visitors – within the UK and overseas

5. Destination Management and Promotion

5.1. The Strategy

Despite being the one of the few towns that is close to Hadrian's Wall, Haltwhistle recognises that it is not fulfilling its potential as a tourism destination. Hadrian's Wall attracts many thousands of visitors but only a very small proportion of these make the short journey into Haltwhistle. The town feels that Haltwhistle currently lacks the attractions or facilities to attract visitors and to keep them in the town. The town is hoping to enhance its tourism offer whilst maintaining its charm and un-commercial nature.

Haltwhistle recognises that it will have to grasp new opportunities to ensure that the town caters for the needs of more demanding visitors. The strategy which the town needs to adopt is to focus on its strengths and unique selling points and to develop and promote these to meet the expectations of the target visitor markets. By strengthening its offer and beginning to shift a little more upmarket Haltwhistle will broaden its appeal, attract more higher-spending visitors and make its visitor economy much more sustainable for the future.

Most effort and actions need to be focused on areas where there will be most impact. This could include important town management issues, new developments or attracting in an iconic business which can raise the profile of a whole town. Such developments lift confidence and aspirations of many other businesses and organisations and generate PR coverage.

Currently within Haltwhistle very few businesses see the town as a tourism destination. Outside of the accommodation providers the businesses only seek to meet the needs of local people rather than considering what visitors require. There is a need to build confidence within the town so that it sees itself as a visitor destination so that individuals and organisations have the confidence to invest in their businesses and properties. All partners need to work together to make it happen - it will require effort and investment from private, public and voluntary sectors to make the step change over the next few years.

The next section illustrates the future target markets that Haltwhistle wishes to focus on before identifying what the future visitor experience in Haltwhistle could be.

Future Target Markets

The views of local tourism businesses illustrated in section 4.2 indicate there are a number of improvements that could be made in the town to enable it to better fulfil its potential as a visitor destination.

Currently, Haltwhistle is attracting visitors from the Traditional, Functional and Habitual segments these are visitors that enjoy heritage attractions, the natural environment and generally the peace and quiet and the chance to unwind.

It has been reported through this work that accommodation providers often encounter people who have only scheduled one night in the town as they had not realised how much there is to do in the surrounding area. As a result it is felt the town should concentrate their efforts on trying to get their existing visitors to spend more time in the area.

As Habitual visitors are generally a low spending group, it has been decided to target activity at better meeting the needs of Traditional and Functional visitors so that they stay longer and spend more in the town. The Visitor Survey in 2003 found that the average length of stay for day visitors is only 1.42 hours, whilst overnight visitors are staying about 6 nights.

A longer term aspiration for the town is to attract Cosmopolitan visitors:

- **Cosmopolitans** - Strong, active confident. Style and brand are important, but as an expression of their self made identity. High spenders, especially on innovation and technology. Looking for new challenges, new experiences. Globetrotters. Our Cosmopolitan couple in the workshop exercise were Jake and Tamsin. More detailed descriptions of the visitor segments are given in Appendix 4.

Haltwhistle could appeal to Cosmopolitan visitors due to the wide range of outdoor activities that they could do from a base in Haltwhistle (walking, mountain biking, climbing, horse riding etc) which would offer Cosmopolitans the new challenges and experiences they desire, however due to the nature of these visitors they may not visit Haltwhistle more than once. The ideal scenario might be that they come for a short break and find that there is more to see and do than they thought so they return for a second, perhaps longer, visit. However they are unlikely to become regular visitors. Their main value is that they spend well while here and will spread the word to friends and family about good places to visit. However, given these visitors have more upmarket tastes and likes the town recognises that currently they would struggle to meet the needs of Cosmopolitans given the limited range of eating and retail establishments. It is hoped that as the town establishes itself as a tourism destination and 'raises its game' with respect to its existing markets then more businesses will see the value in catering for the needs of Cosmopolitan visitors.

Businesses and tourism groups in Haltwhistle should continue to work with Northumberland Tourism and Hadrian's Wall Heritage to use the ArkLeisure segmentation model to identify ways of packaging experiences for the towns target visitor types and to identify which messages will be most effective.

We have looked to reflect the needs, values and interests of these target markets in this destination plan. The next section examines Haltwhistle's current tourism offer and how it relates to the expectations of future target visitors to identify actions required.

Meeting Future Visitor Expectations

Looking specifically at the target markets identified by the town, Haltwhistle has chosen to better meet the needs of its existing visitors - Traditionals and Functionals – so that they may stay longer in the town and spend more money. In the longer term the town is hoping that it can raise its game enough to attract some more 'upmarket' visitors to the town – Cosmopolitans, who would be attracted to the area because of the range of outdoor activities available.

Traditionals tend to be relatively self reliant and internally referenced. They value good service, and this is something that they will pay for, especially in terms of individual attention. They live life at a relaxed pace and enjoy intellectual challenges, arts and culture. In terms of holidays, Traditionals may like a self-catering cottage or a cosy B&B. They would like traditional pubs for eating out or just a quiet drink. Traditionals like heritage attractions which would include National Trust attractions,

churches and cathedrals and botanical gardens. They tend to look for days out and attractions that are peaceful & relaxing, nostalgic and educational.

Functionals are similar to Traditionals in that they like heritage attractions. They tend to seek nostalgic and somewhat educational experiences from their holidays. However, this segment is much more price sensitive than the Traditional segment.

Traditionals and Functionals would like the history and heritage associated with Haltwhistle; this includes Hadrian's Wall, the Border Reiver heritage, Holy Cross Church, Hexham Abbey and the various Roman sites (Vindolanda etc). As these segments like the outdoors they would enjoy the various walks that are available in and around the town such as the Haltwhistle Burn walk and the Haltwhistle rings and may have found out about Haltwhistle through the Walking Festival.

As these groups value good service they will not like the variable opening and closing times that many of the shops and cafes keep in the town; and particularly that many shops are closed on a Wednesday afternoon. These visitors would like to see a better range of places to eat, more indoor attractions and more arts and craft shops.

As discussed above, the longer term aspiration for Haltwhistle is to try and attract Cosmopolitan visitors. Cosmopolitans are independently minded and value individual and independent shops and eating places. They value excellent service and individual attention and are interested in new products, experiences, technology and modern style. They particularly enjoy shopping - upmarket clothes, gifts, antiques and specialist shops. They like art, culture and cooking, intellectual and physical challenges, theatre, films, wine bars, walks, the beach and countryside. They have a slight bias to towards heritage and arts or cultural attractions. They are also attracted towards days out in the 'great outdoors'. Cosmopolitans are looking for short breaks which involve time to themselves to escape and expand their knowledge and experiences.

Cosmopolitans would enjoy many of the attractions and activities that Traditionals and Functionals enjoy but they are also a more active segment, so they would enjoy being able to get out into the countryside to do activities such as rock climbing at Padda Crag or Spadeadam and Mountain biking.

If Haltwhistle is to attract higher spending visitors successfully it will need to raise its game considerably in the retail and food sectors. These visitors like speciality shops and local produce. Although there are some speciality shops in the town, they are insufficient to lift the overall offer. The quality and range of food and drink in the town is limited and has been highlighted in both the 2003 visitor survey, the business survey and the Retail Distinctiveness study as elements that needs improving. Retailers promoting local produce, a good café or an award winning pub

In order to encourage visitors to spend longer in the town, attractions and heritage interpretation will need to be interesting and engaging, possibly using new media or clever ideas. The 2003 survey highlighted that visitors were less satisfied with the range of places to visit in the town so this is an area that the town really needs to develop.

The town needs to look to provide more evening entertainment in order to meet the needs of these target markets. Currently evening activity tends to be limited to a visit to the local pub but more evening entertainment that appeals to locals and visitors would bring the town to life for these visitors and encourage them to spend, stay longer and recommend it to others. Activities such as evening guided walks and cycle rides, wildlife watching, recitals or poetry readings and live music will

all appeal to visitors. Haltwhistle could build on its heritage by promoting Northumbrian culture such as music, dancing, ballads and language in the town.

Much of the charm of Haltwhistle is its un-commercial and traditional nature, so the town needs to be mindful of not changing the character of the town too much. In order to retain and increase the target visitor markets the best of the traditional should be brought out in Haltwhistle. Thus it would be good to see one or two pubs serving excellent, traditional food and more information and attractions centred on the heritage of the area.

Thought also needs to be given to special needs of families, cyclists and walkers, and overseas visitors. This may include the promotion of family friendly eating places as well as children's activities and trails at attractions. Cyclists and Walkers are an important market whose requirements need to be considered – drying rooms, secure storage and route maps are all appreciated by these visitors. Hearty meals and local beers and soft drinks will appeal to active visitors. Overseas visitor origins should be monitored to identify which nationalities are most common and whether this indicates the need for information in other languages for example. The most cost effective way to do this is on the internet thereby avoiding expensive printing costs.

For each of the identified future target markets, the town conducted an exercise to identify what that market would like about the town, what they would dislike and what they would like to see in the future. The full results of this exercise can be found in Appendix 6

5.2. The Future Visitor Experience

The overall vision for Haltwhistle as a visitor destination is given in section 2.1. The points below expand on the vision and give a more detailed description of what visitors will experience when they come to Haltwhistle in the future.

In 5 – 10 years time Haltwhistle will offer visitors a better Market Town Welcome because:

Haltwhistle will be recognised as the ideal base if you wish to visit Hadrian's Wall Country, explore the area's history and heritage or to lose yourself in the wilderness of the area's natural beauty. Visitors will love that they can base themselves in the Haltwhistle area and visit Hadrian's Wall, the Northumberland Coast, the Lake District, Scotland, Northumberland National Park and the North Pennines National Park.

Walkers will continue to be attracted to the area and are appreciative of the additional services that the town provides for them. They now plan ahead to schedule a two or three night stop to "recharge their batteries" and fully see all that the area has to offer.

Haltwhistle's walking festivals have a national reputation and the town offers a number of waymarked trails in and around the town and villages that guide visitors around the many historic buildings and attractions and tell the colourful stories of the area's history.

Haltwhistle will have a developing reputation for cycling and enthusiasts are amazed at the outstanding provision and support there is for cyclists in the town. Many cyclists on the Hadrian's Cycleway look forward to stopping in Haltwhistle, and many return again when they are on the Pennine Cycleway. Haltwhistle has been named as an example of excellence in encouraging this environmentally friendly activity.

Visitors love the warm Northern welcome that they receive and their stay is enriched by the wealth of local information that accommodation providers and local businesses have at their fingertips. They appreciate the range of independent speciality shops that serve the needs of both local people and visitors and the uncommercialised nature of the town. Haltwhistle and its surrounding villages will have a reputation for offering a range of eating establishments that specialise in sourcing and using local produce.

Visitors will love the new facilities in the town where they can research their family history and learn about Romans and Reivers and the rich natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the area.

5.3. Destination Priorities

The exercise in section 5.1 proved that the town and its surrounding area has a number of strengths to offer its target visitors, but also that there were a number of common themes or areas for improvement that would enable the town to become more attractive to its target markets. The main priorities for Haltwhistle are:

1. Development and promotion of attractions within Haltwhistle
2. Promotion of Haltwhistle as a walking destination
3. Development of Haltwhistle as a cycling destination
4. Better heritage interpretation of Reiver, Border, Religious and Roman history
5. Increasing the range of eating places available in Haltwhistle

In addition two other areas have been identified which are required to help the town operate as an effective destination - to join things up, attract visitors, manage their impacts and enhance their visits. These are:

6. Appearance of the town
7. Marketing and Promotion
8. Transport and Signage
9. Community and co-ordination

The following sections explain and develop these priorities in a little more detail:

Attractions and Activities

Hadrian's Wall is clearly the major attraction in the Haltwhistle area. Many thousands of visitors come to the Wall every year either to see the roman sites or just to walk or cycle parts of the Wall. However, only a small proportion of these visitors come to Haltwhistle as part of their stay. Most bypass Haltwhistle and choose to stop in Hexham or Corbridge. A Countryside Agency Market Towns Initiative Healthcheck carried out in 2002 highlighted only 1% of visitors to Hadrian's Wall were coming into town, despite it being just 1.5 miles away.

The town recognised that there is perhaps, little to attract visitors to the town – the audit and comments from the town meetings summarised – *“there is nothing they would want to spend their money on”*.

The town therefore wants to build on its strengths to better promote the attractions and activities in and around the town which could entice visitors from the Wall to stay in the area. The Market Town Welcome project has demonstrated that there is a wide range of activities and attractions that can be accessed from Haltwhistle but visitors (and indeed accommodation providers) do not always know what is on offer.

In addition Haltwhistle feels that some new attractions and activities could be developed in the town that tell the history and heritage of the area. One of the strengths of Haltwhistle is the variety of history and heritage associated with it which includes Romans, Border Reivers and Religious history amongst others. However, with the exception of Roman history, there is little to interpret this heritage. In addition, there is a growing interest for researching family history. Many accommodation providers and tourism businesses commented that recently they are seeing more American visitors who are interested in finding out about their ancestors. The town would like to investigate whether it is feasible to provide visitors with more information about the history of the area. They envisage small scale developments such as a family history research section in the new library, or utilising an empty shop to interpret the border reiver history.

Of importance to this priority is the potential tourism development on the A69. In 2004 a major study was undertaken for One NorthEast and the North West Development Agency⁴ to assess the potential of Hadrian's Wall to support the regeneration of the North of England through the growth of tourism revenues and to deliver a new Vision for Hadrian's Wall. This study recommended that a series of 'Story Centres' were established along the length of Hadrian's Wall to present an overview of the Wall story and to intrigue visitors to explore the existing Hadrian's Wall visitor sites, in particular those sites close to the Story Centre. The report proposed that the main Story Centre should be located in Haltwhistle with a transport hub linked to the Centre.

It was argued that Haltwhistle is close enough to serve the main central sites on Hadrian's Wall but does not have the same parking constraints. The town is well located to just off the A69 and has an excellent railway station nearby that would allow visitors to use public transportation for their visit.

The site that has been identified is off the A69, opposite the Hadrian Business Park; however, it was identified that before any development can occur changes need to be made to the access to the Hadrian Business Park and also the tourism development site. Current access is restricted by a low bridge under a railway line and many potential developers have been deterred by the operational difficulties this causes. Work started earlier this year on a multi-million pound roundabout on the A69 which will provide direct vehicle access into the Hadrian Business Park and surrounding development land on both sides of the A69.

However, since 2004 a review has suggested that Haltwhistle does not have the tourism infrastructure to support the scale of development that was suggested in the Major Study. Consequently a brief is currently in development for a feasibility study to explore the options for tourism developments that could go on this site. Suggestions that have emerged to date include a second hotel (to complement the Centre of Britain), a rest stop or café, and a retail/local produce outlet.

⁴ Hadrian's Wall Major Study (March 2004) Economics Research Associates

A key challenge for Haltwhistle will be to ensure that any tourism development that is located on the site near the A69 is well integrated with the town. There is a risk that by having a tourism attraction on the outskirts of Haltwhistle visitors will continue to bypass the town rather than using the shops and services within Haltwhistle. The Haltwhistle Partnership and Haltwhistle Town Council will have to work with NSP, Hadrian's Wall Partnership and other key stakeholders to ensure that Haltwhistle can maximise the benefits offered by development on this site.

The town, in partnership with NSP and Northumberland Tourism, should investigate the feasibility of a new centre which focuses on Hadrian's Wall, but also incorporates the other history and heritage of the area and how to visit the key sites by foot, bike and car (ideally with routes which take you through Haltwhistle). The centre could act as the hub for walking and cycling and help people plan their routes using heritage themes for various trails/areas which are designed so that visitors pass through the town. The local pull into the town could then be the Centre of Britain sculpture/artwork, plus the Craft Centre and supporting excellent eating places, shops etc. All these would be heavily promoted in the new attraction.

Walking

Walking and, to a lesser extent, cycling are important tourism markets for Haltwhistle and the Hadrian's Wall area generally. Haltwhistle is close to two national long distance walking trails (Hadrian's Wall Path and the Pennine Way) and holds two walking festivals per year (Spring and Autumn). Over 400 walkers visited the town and took part in the 2007 spring festival. The walking festival was launched in 2003 shortly after the Hadrian's Wall long distance trail was opened. The Festival helped to raise the profile of Haltwhistle as a visitor destination. Many of the accommodation providers have the Walkers Welcome status to demonstrate that they offer facilities to meet the needs of walkers.



However, more could be made of Haltwhistle's walking credentials; there is a need for better promotion and marketing of the large number of routes and trails that are accessible from the town. Haltwhistle would be an ideal base for anyone who wanted to do a number of short day walks in this beautiful area but often visitors are only aware of the long distance trails. In line with this, walkers need to be made more aware of the range of other activities and attractions available in the area. Accommodation providers have fed back to us through the Market Town Welcome process that often walkers staying with them have expressed surprise at the number of things to do locally and wished they had arranged to spend longer in the area as part of their walk. Encouraging walkers to stay longer than one night would also be of benefit to accommodation providers, who are often are luke warm about walkers on the long distance trails as most visitors are moving on the next day.



A concept that Haltwhistle could look to explore to promote itself as a walking destination is to get recognised as a 'Walkers are Welcome' town. Hebden Bridge in the South Pennines became Britain's first Walkers are Welcome town in February 2007. The town developed the idea in summer 2006, modelling it on the Fairtrade town concept. The benefits of having this status include:

- Giving the town high profile for walking and countryside

- Attracting more walkers to the town
- Encouraging local people to walk more and generates health benefits
- Improving provision for walkers in the local area
- Economic benefits from more visitors
- Improves understanding of importance of walking to the local economy

In order to get Walkers are Welcome status Haltwhistle would have to meet six criteria:

1. Demonstration of popular support for the concept (e.g. a petition)
2. Formal endorsement of application by local council (town or district), including identifying a lead officer and small budget
3. Action to ensure that rights of way are well maintained
4. Marketing the Walkers are welcome status through press coverage, signs, maps, leaflets, stickers and having two waymarked walks from the town.
5. Encouragement of walking using public transport e.g. including info on leaflets
6. Mechanisms to maintain walkers are welcome status - e.g. through the steering group.

As Haltwhistle has an emerging reputation for walking through its annual Walking Festival – ‘Walkers are Welcome’ status could be the next step in developing the town as a walking destination.

More detail on Hebden Bridge is set out in a case study in the overarching report.

Cycling

Walking and cycling are complementary activities. There are two long distance cycle paths (Pennine Cycleway (NCN 68) and Hadrian’s Cycleway (NCN 72)) which pass by Haltwhistle. Currently, there is limited provision for cyclists who visit Haltwhistle, although there are some accommodation providers with the Cyclists Welcome quality mark.



Work is currently already underway in Haltwhistle to investigate the feasibility of establishing Haltwhistle as a cycling hub. The project (which is funded by Northumberland Strategic Partnership) has been working with regional stakeholders and interested parties including



the local community to identify and survey potential routes and consulting with landowners where access is required. The feasibility stage of the work is currently reporting to NSP, with recommendations that Haltwhistle progresses to the ‘implementation’ stage of the work, which will involve finalizing the route selection; consultation with all relevant people regarding access i.e. PROW and others; creating and agreeing a marketing mix approach i.e. cycle route map /guides & leaflets, website, GPS download; preparing a rationale for waymarking;

Costing up installation of waymarking if deemed appropriate; and providing support and guidance to service-providers.

Although NSP is funding the development of the cycling hub, in order for it to succeed and bring economic return to the town then it needs to be supported by service-providers, properly marketed, and suitably maintained. It will be important that where possible, the town considers the needs of cyclists. Factors such as the provision of route maps, places to buy emergency equipment, secure cycle storage and luggage transfer are all 'service' aspects of developing a cycling hub that Haltwhistle will need to consider if it is to develop a good reputation for cycling and support for cyclists. There are seven types of service-provision for routes of all types:

1. Accommodation
2. Refreshments
3. Relevant shops
4. Visitor attractions
5. Art and handicrafts (for interest and facilities)
6. Cycle-friendly transport
7. Support services i.e. cycle hire, luggage transfer, cycle holiday businesses, tourist information centres, toilets, cash points etc

The seven types of service-provision need to be integral to the 'route' and its 'users' for all seven categories of services to combine and contribute to the enjoyment of travelling along it for any distance.

Heritage and Interpretation

Hadrian's Wall is clearly the most important heritage feature in the Haltwhistle area, and Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited are undertaking a lot of work to improve the visitor experience associated with the Wall and are looking to update and differentiate the site interpretation for visitors. As discussed above, there were plans to develop a Hadrian's Wall Story Centre in Haltwhistle which could have provided the catalyst to Haltwhistle's tourism economy. As previously mentioned, a feasibility study is currently underway to examine the tourism opportunities offered by the identified site.

In addition to Hadrian's Wall, Haltwhistle has a huge amount of history and heritage associated with it – this includes the Romans, the border Reivers, industrial heritage, railways, castles and religion and also a growing market for genealogy and family history. However, the audit revealed there were little interpretive materials and facilities actually in the town. A strategic approach to all the heritage stories of the town is required to give focus and interest visitors and to help them appreciate the historic townscape. Haltwhistle should consider a ways it could tell the long history of the area – either through town trails which pass significant buildings, guided walks or perhaps indoor exhibitions. Maintenance of historic properties throughout the town is vital to sustain Haltwhistle's attractiveness as a place to live and visit. Already work is underway through the Retail Distinctiveness Study to improve the appearance of the town through a shop-front improvement scheme and this is looking to restore shops to their original 'Haltwhistle style'. Indeed the Haltwhistle Partnership is committed to developing the Market Place area and surrounding properties in line with the recommendations from the Retail Distinctiveness Study.

Heritage and interpretation materials will support the 'attractions' priority above by creating themed activities and possibly attractions around the heritage of the area and thus provide visitors with something to do, and a reason to come into the town.

Food and Drink

The audit, along with discussions with local residents and businesses, has identified that there are some issues with food and drink provision within Haltwhistle, particularly with respect to food serving times and opening hours of cafés and restaurants and also the range of food and drink that is on offer locally.

There is a need for the town to work together to improve the catering offer within Haltwhistle. Accommodation providers expressed particular frustration at suggesting places to eat for their visitors only to find they are shut unexpectedly. Businesses should work together to support restaurants and cafes who are looking to improve their offer. We understand that recently the Pillar Box Café has responded to requests for more evening food provision by opening in the evenings over the weekend. Efforts such as these should be supported by local people and local businesses.

Existing cafes, restaurants and pubs could upgrade their food offer, promote their local sourcing and recipes and ensure that the quality of the service is excellent. The town needs to work with the existing eating establishments to try and ensure consistency of service, opening hours and quality, and efforts should be made to increase the range of food on offer in the town. Existing businesses should look to identify opportunities to serve the visitor market - given the priorities for cycling and walking a 'packed lunch' service would probably be appreciated by these visitors.

Town Appearance

Haltwhistle has a strong historic character with many of the buildings in the town retaining a number of historic features that are particular to the local area. Good maintenance of these historic properties is vital to sustain its attractiveness as a place to live and visit. The Retail Distinctiveness study identified that there are some activities that would improve the appearance and welcome of the town which would help to attract visitors, and work is underway on a shop-front improvement scheme which is looking to restore shops to their original 'Haltwhistle style'. The Haltwhistle Partnership is committed to improving the market place and the surrounding buildings, and is implementing actions from the Retail Distinctiveness Action Plan. It is important that the Partnership consider whether any actions need revising in the light of the findings of this research before they are implemented.

Marketing and Promotion

As discussed previously, Hadrian's Wall is the biggest draw to tourists in this area of Northumberland. Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited is responsible for marketing the Wall and increasing visits to the site by 10% and it is therefore important that Haltwhistle works with this organisation to ensure that Haltwhistle is included in wider Hadrian's Wall literature and marketing materials and that its central location on the Wall is emphasised. Currently there is a feeling amongst businesses that the Hadrian's Wall literature has little to say about Haltwhistle.

As Hadrian's Wall is a recognised 'brand' and attraction across the UK, Haltwhistle could look for ways of linking marketing for the town into the wider marketing for Hadrian's Wall and Hadrian's Wall Country.

It is also important that Haltwhistle work with both the private and public sector to ensure that there is co-ordinated marketing of the town with joined up messages. Currently there is confusion about the town – indeed on entering Haltwhistle you are greeted with signs proclaiming:

"Centre of Roman Britain"

"Centre of Britain"

"Gateway to Hadrian's Wall"

There was some discussion around the main identity or messages for promotion for Haltwhistle. Many people would like to see the "Centre of Britain" concept used more widely to help develop a 'brand' for the town although this brand would not tie in with the Hadrian's Wall 'hook'. An alternative could be "Centre of Hadrian's Wall" or "Centre of Hadrian's Wall Country" which could be developed to deliver the message that Haltwhistle is a central base from which you can access a number of attractions, activities and towns.

Other ideas that were suggested included:

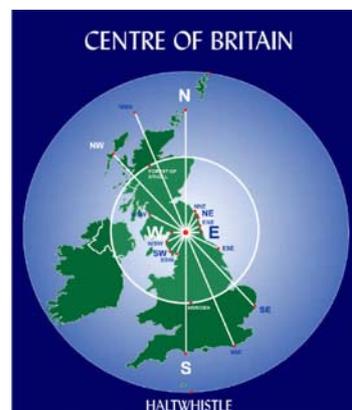
- *"The Romans knew when they were on to a good thing"*
- *"The Centre – which ever way you look at it"*
- *"Over 1,000 days out. Over 1,000 years of history. Over 1,000 sights and sounds. Come and stay – there are 1000 years of history and wilderness on our door step – year round"*

Figure 4: Geographic Centre of New Zealand



Photograph by James Shook (Wikipedia)

A promotional idea for the town that capitalises on its 'Centre of Britain' status would be to install some art, or a sculpture of some kind to mark the exact location of the Centre of Britain. This would create an additional 'attraction' for the area as visitors often like to have a photograph at these locations.



Marketing will need to bring all the strengths of the town together to communicate messages to target markets. Events, such as the Walking Festival need better promotion and could raise the town's profile significantly.

Transport, Parking and Signage

The town identified that there could be improvements made to the signage in and around Haltwhistle that could enhance visitors' perceptions of the town. Currently there is little to tell the

uninformed visitor to Hadrian's Wall that the town is less than three miles away, or the facilities that it has for visitors. Equally, many visitors in Haltwhistle do not realise how near they are to the Wall.

Although currently there does not appear to be any issues with parking in Haltwhistle, the town needs to consider whether it has the infrastructure to cope with visitors driving into the town. The Audit identified there are about 150 parking spaces in the town, although there are rumours that some of the car parking areas have been sold for development. Visitor parking provision needs to be integrated with the parking needs of the working and residential community and therefore an overall strategy is required. The strategy should encourage more people to use public transport, cycle or walk. Options for visitors include looking at park and walk facilities - reducing the number of cars which enter the centre, or parking on the outskirts could link to the Hadrian's Wall bus.

Community and Co-ordination

Haltwhistle recognises that individual residents and businesses within the town have a role to play in terms of improving the tourism product available. Currently there are good relationships between the main community groups, which includes the Haltwhistle Partnership, the town Council, Chamber of Trade and Tourism Association, who have all been involved in this process. However, it has been noted that there could be better joint working between groups – particularly the Chamber of Trade and the Haltwhistle Tourism Association to help progress this Development Plan.

Importantly, the town recognises that they are somewhat behind other Market Towns in terms of their development as a tourism destination. Whilst towns such as Seahouses and Alnwick are on the 'tourist map' Haltwhistle is a relatively unknown destination. Many of the actions and activities that have been identified are around the better co-ordination and promotion of what already exists in Haltwhistle in addition to capital projects. The town is likely to need designated resource in order to carry out this work.

6. Programme of Actions

6.1. Action Plan

This section lists all the ideas and proposals suggested during the process or identified by the consultants, under the priority headings. The table summarises the full range of potential actions and begins to identify how we get there and who needs to be involved. With all the actions the crucial factor is what organisation is willing to take the lead and drive things forward. The final sections include a range of potential business development and support actions, plus actions required to co-ordinate between organisations across the plan. It is followed by more detailed descriptions of the top priority actions.

		Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost/funding
1	Attractions and Activities					
1.1	Provide enhanced markets	Very High	Quick Win	2 & 3	Haltwhistle Partnership and Local Authority	£50,000
1.2	Heritage centre -TIC, coffee shop, local archives, family history, history, heritage	Very High	Short	2	Haltwhistle Partnership, Haltwhistle Tourism Association	
1.3	Hadrian's Wall orientation point/Hadrian's Wall centre	Very High	Short	2 & 3 & 4	Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd	
1.4	Development of a Craft Centre to showcase local artists and crafts people	Very High	Short	3	Haltwhistle Partnership & Local Businesses	
1.5	Development of the riverbank as a park/picnic area	Very High	Medium	2	Town Council & Chamber of Trade	
1.6	Increase the Film Circuit backing during the Summer season for evening entertainment	Medium	Quick Win	1	Local Authority	
1.7	Better promotion of evening entertainment and more provision	Medium	Quick Win	1	Local Organisations	
1.8	Conduct a full audit of activities (arts, crafts, rural skills, etc) available locally and look for ways of packaging/promoting these for visitors	High	Short	1 & 2	Haltwhistle Partnership	
2	Walking					
2.1	Investigation of the feasibility of Haltwhistle obtaining	Very High	Quick Win	1	Haltwhistle Partnership	

		Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost/funding
	'Walkers are Welcome' status					
2.2	Better promotion of walking and the facilities and trails that are available in and around Haltwhistle	Very High	Short	1	Northumberland Tourism/Haltwhistle Partnership	
2.3	Development of a town heritage walk e.g. around the blue plaque buildings or other interesting areas.	High	Short	2	Haltwhistle Partnership, Walking Festival Committee	
3	Cycling					
3.1	Development of Haltwhistle as a Cycling hub (mountain biking, downhill biking, national trails)	Very High	Quick Win	2 & 3	Ted Liddle/Tourism Association/Haltwhistle Partnership	
4	Heritage and Interpretation					
4.1	Better information on the wide history and heritage of the town – Reivers, etc (links to 1.2 and 1.2)	Very High	Short	2	Local History Society/Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd / Northumberland Tourism	
4.2	Better promotion when steam trains come into the town - create events around this	Very High	Short	2	Northumberland Tourism/Local Authority	

		Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost/funding
5	Food and Drink					
5.1	Encourage eating establishments to improve the quality of product that they offer	Very High	Short	1	Chamber of Trade/ Haltwhistle Partnership	
5.2	Longer and more regular opening hours in cafés/restaurants during the tourist season	Very High	Quick Win	1	Chamber of Trade	
5.3	Local Food seriously used and promoted within the eating establishments in town	Very High	Quick Win	1	Chamber of Trade	
5.4	Encourage a wider range of eating establishments	Very High	Medium – Long	3	Private Investment	
5.5	Provide a pilot local produce fund for co-operative activity	Very High	Medium	2	Haltwhistle Partnership/ Made in Northumberland	£25,000
5.6	Develop a local produce awareness campaign and a local producers directory	Very High		2	Haltwhistle Partnership/ Made in Northumberland	£100,000
5.7	Get Fairtrade Town status	Medium	Short	1	Leadership Group	
6	Town Appearance					
6.1	Implement a targeted town improvement scheme including shop front improvements - refreshing the paintwork	Very High	Quick Win	2	Haltwhistle Partnership	£300,000
6.2	Cut back the trees at Haltwhistle Station so that visitors can see the river	Very High	Quick Win	1-2	Haltwhistle Partnership & Network Rail	

		Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost/funding
6.3	Enhance the station square as a gateway to the town centre from the train station and bus hub	Very High	Quick Win - Short	1	Haltwhistle Partnership and Town Council	
6.4	Enhance the gateway approach at Lanty's Lonnen	Very High	Medium		Haltwhistle Partnership	£200,000
6.5	Enhance use of Market Place, including art work/statue to create a focal point	High	Quick Win	2	Haltwhistle Partnership & Local Authority	£100,000
6.6	Enhancement and opening up of the memorial and surrounding garden for visitors to enjoy	Medium	Long	1 & 2	Haltwhistle Partnership & Town Council	£100,000
6.7	Complete installation of traditional style light columns throughout the town centre	Low	Long	4	Local Authority	£75,000
6.8	Create new focus at Aesica Road cross road				Local Authority	£300,000
6.9	Enhance the setting of the location of the general market				Local Authority & Haltwhistle Partnership	£100,000
7	Marketing and Promotions					
7.1	Strengthen promotional and marketing linkages between Haltwhistle and Hadrian's Wall	Very High	Quick Win	2	Northumberland Tourism, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd & Haltwhistle Partnership	
7.2	Further development to the Town Map – include town trail and useful information	Very High	Quick Win	1	Local Authority	
7.3	Turn the information board at Haltwhistle Station around	Very High	Quick Win	1	Local Authority	

		Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost/funding
7.4	Better promotion of current visitor experiences available e.g. riding facilities, golf club , climbing etc	High	Quick Win	1	Local Authority (TIC)	
7.5	Consider art work at the 'Centre of Britain' site	High	Short	1	Haltwhistle Partnership	
7.6	Better town marketing, change perceptions, draw in the villages and farms outside of the town	Very High	Short	2	TIC/Tourism Assoc/HW Partnership	
7.7	Investigate possibility of advertising in trains that run through Haltwhistle	Very High	Short	2	Haltwhistle Tourism Association	
7.8	Improvements to the town website to provide more information for visitors and more user friendly	High	Quick Win	1	Haltwhistle Partnership	
8	Transport and Signage					
8.1	Information boards at the National Park Centre (Once Brewed) to promote Haltwhistle	Very High	Quick Win	1	National Park & Leadership Group	
8.2	Improved Taxi provision	Very High	Quick Win	2	Local Authority	
8.3	Better information boards on all major 'gateways' into the town	Very High	Quick Win	2	Local Authority	
8.4	Better signage to Hadrian's Wall from the town	Very High	Quick Win	2	Local Authority /Town Council	
8.5	Improved advanced directional and repeater signage to main car parks	Very High	Quick Win	2	Local Authority	£15,000

		Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost/funding
9	Community/Co-ordination Schemes					
9.1	Employ a tourism co-ordinator on a long term (5 year) contract.	Very High	Quick Win	2	Haltwhistle Partnership	
9.2	Joint working or merging of Tourism associations and Chamber of Trade to form one body.	Very High	Quick Win	1	Tourism Association/Chamber of Trade	
9.3	Better communications and joint working between agencies, local organisations and local providers	Very High	Quick Win	1	Tourism Association/Hadrian's Wall Heritage/Northumberland Tourism	
9.4	Local Tourism Thinktank	Very High	Quick Win	1	Tourism Association	
10	Business support/training					
10.1	Orientation visits for local accommodation providers. Local businesses and TIC staff	Very High	Quick Win	1	Northumberland Tourism/TIC	
10.2	Provide a town ambassadors scheme for local businesses	Very High	Quick Win - Short	1	Chamber of Trade/Tourism Associations	
10.3	Develop a town ambassadors pack	Very High	Quick Win - Short	1	Chamber of Trade/Tourism Associations	£40,000

		Priority	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Cost/funding
10.4	Eco-tourism and encourage businesses to be as environmentally friendly as possible	High	Short	2	Local Authority	
10.5	Development and roll-out of Passport to Northumberland training to all accommodation providers, businesses and TIC Staff	Very High	Short	2	Northumberland National Park	
10.6	Training and grants to help businesses be disabled friendly	Medium	Short	2	Local Authority	
10.7	Support for businesses - start up, developments, subsidies	High	Short	2	Business Link/Local Authority	
10.8	Support local traders through business support and customer care development activities	High	Short	2	Business Link North East & Haltwhistle Partnership	£20,000
	Grey shaded actions were identified in the Haltwhistle Retail Distinctiveness Action Plan					
	Shaded actions are identified as the main key projects that the town would like to action					

Timescale	
Quick win	Less than 12 months
Short Term	1 – 2 years
Medium Term	2 – 5 years
Long Term	Over 5 years

Delivery	
1	We can deliver locally
2	We can deliver with partners
3	Business Investment Opportunity
4	Needs outside lead

6.2. Priority Projects

The actions shaded gold in the above table were rated as priority projects for the town – ones that address key deficiencies or that could provide a catalyst to further tourism development. These projects are considered in greater detail below - with a view to local organisations being able to take them forward over the next few years

Attractions

Action	Heritage Centre and Hadrian's Wall Centre
Project Number	1.2, 1.3 & 4.1
Description	<p>A key issue for Haltwhistle is that there are thousands of tourists visiting Hadrian's Wall every year, but very few of these tourists spend any time in Haltwhistle (estimated at only 1%). The audit revealed that the town is lacking in indoor attractions which would encourage visitors to the town. The town has therefore identified a need for some indoor facilities that could provide information and interpretation materials about the Wall and also the wider range of history and culture that can be found in the area. The town would like to incorporate elements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reivers • Romans • Border History • Family History • Religious History • Natural, cultural and industrial history • Hadrian's Wall orientation point <p>It has been recognised that the town may not have the infrastructure or space to build a major new tourism attraction that would encompass all of these elements, indeed the proposed Hadrian's Wall Story Centre has not been progressed due to concerns regarding the infrastructure in Haltwhistle. However, there are things that could be done on a smaller scale that would provide visitors to the town with more things to do. Suggestions have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using space within the new library development to tell the history of the area • Using an empty shop to tell the history of the area • Town Trails • Events such as the Roman Market

	As discussed above although the Story Centre did not come to fruition a development site has been identified on the A69 for a tourism development of some kind. Feasibility work is currently being undertaken to investigate the potential options for this site. It is important that the town feed into this work to ensure that the town can maximise the benefits offered from the site and its development. As the site is slightly out of town there is a risk that it could divert visitors away from the town centre even more, therefore the town should ensure the development complements activity within the town rather than competing with it.
Cost	Unknown
Lead Delivery Organisation	Haltwhistle Partnership
Other Partners	Haltwhistle Tourism Association, Hadrian's Wall Heritage, Northumberland Tourism,
Key Issues	Identifying potential sites Identifying what information/resources the town has and how this can be used to enhance the visitor experience within the town Unknown activity to go on the A69 site which could compete with the town
Timetable	Short
Next Steps	Audit of the information and resources that are held in the town which could be used for such an attraction Identification of potential sites that could be used for an attraction of some kind Undertake feasibility study

Action	Development of a Craft Centre to Showcase local artists and crafts people
Project Number	1.4
Description	Linked to projects 1.2 and 1.3, in addition to a lack of attractions for visitors, the audit revealed a lack of shops where visitors would like to spend their money. Currently there are no craft shops in the town. Following the success of a craft fair held at Featherstone castle last year a suggestion has been put forward that the Haltwhistle Partnership could purchase/rent one of the empty shop units in the town and use it for displaying and selling local art and crafts. The unit could also be used as a hub where visitors can try their hand at arts and crafts which could be led by local craftspeople.
Cost	Unknown
Lead Delivery Organisation	Haltwhistle Partnership
Other Partners	Local crafts people, Local Businesses, Chamber of Trade
Key Issues	<p>Identification of suitable premises</p> <p>Securing funding for purchase/rent of premises</p> <p>Identifying and engaging crafts people</p>
Timetable	Short
Next Steps	<p>Identify potential premises for a craft shop</p> <p>Identify and engage with crafts people</p> <p>Identify business models on how shop would operate</p> <p>Conduct feasibility study</p>

Walking

Action	Investigation of the feasibility of Haltwhistle obtaining 'Walkers are Welcome' status
Project Number	2.1
Description	<p>Although Haltwhistle has a developing reputation for walking through its walking festival and its position close to two national trails there is much more scope to promote Haltwhistle around the walking opportunities that are available from the area.</p> <p>Recently Hebden Bridge in the South Pennines gained recognition for being a town that is welcoming to walkers. Given Haltwhistle's walking credentials, Walkers are Welcome status could further raise the profile of the town amongst walking enthusiasts.</p> <p>Haltwhistle should look to investigate the requirements for 'Walkers are Welcome' status and test the support for this concept with local businesses and the Walking Festival organisers</p>
Cost	Small – mainly staff/volunteer time
Lead Delivery Organisation	Haltwhistle Partnership and Walking Festival Organisers
Other Partners	Haltwhistle Town Council, Local Authority, Local Businesses Northumberland Tourism,
Key Issues	Gaining support for the idea among the local community
Timetable	Quick Win, less than 12 months
Next Steps	<p>Research the requirements of Walkers are Welcome status</p> <p>Contact the Walkers are Welcome network</p> <p>Assess support for the concept amongst the local community</p>

Action	Better promotion of walking and the walking and facilities that are available in and around Haltwhistle
Project Number	2.2
Description	<p>In line with increasing recognition for Haltwhistle as a walking destination there is scope to better promote the walking opportunities that are available in the area.</p> <p>Webpages and a leaflet could be developed that show all of the routes that can be accessed from the town along with ‘walker friendly’ accommodation and attractions along the way. More detailed maps and guides could then be bought locally in the town.</p> <p>Guides should also look to promote other attractions and activities in the area which would encourage walkers to stay longer.</p> <p>There are a number of walking guides for the area that are already produced by agencies such as the Haltwhistle Partnership, Hadrian’s Wall Heritage or Northumberland Tourism, there is perhaps a need for better co-ordination and joint working between these agencies to assist Haltwhistle in benefiting from this market.</p>
Cost	Low – could utilise existing budgets but ensure that the materials better promote the town and its walking opportunities
Lead Delivery Organisation	Haltwhistle Partnership
Other Partners	Hadrian’s Wall Heritage, Northumberland Tourism, Local Authority
Key Issues	Co-ordination of key bodies
Timetable	Quick Win, less than 12 months
Next Steps	<p>Review of existing materials produced on walking in the Haltwhistle area</p> <p>Discussions with key bodies on improvements that could be made</p>

Cycling

Action	Development of Haltwhistle as a cycling hub
Project Number	3.1
Description	<p>A study is currently underway in Haltwhistle to investigate the feasibility of Haltwhistle becoming a cycling hub. The Market Town Welcome project has identified that the opportunities for cycling is a significant strength for the town, but may not be fulfilling its potential.</p> <p>It is imperative that the town look for ways to enhance the cycling product if a cycling hub is developed in the town. Cycling routes need to be supported by a number of factors to make sure that cycling becomes a viable 'tourism product' in Haltwhistle.</p> <p>In addition to well marked and maintained routes, Haltwhistle will need to ensure that a range of service support is available for cyclists. This will include cycling friendly accommodation, refreshments, relevant shops, visitor attractions, art and handicrafts (for interest and facilities), cycle-friendly transport and support services i.e. cycle hire, luggage transfer, cycle holiday businesses, tourist information centres, toilets, cash points etc.</p> <p>Many of the provision above will also enhance the walking product around Haltwhistle as some of the requirements for cyclists and walkers are the same. Improvements suggested above will also contribute to activity 2.1 and 2.2.</p> <p>Accommodation businesses and service providers will need to be kept up to date on the Cycling Hub project and also encouraged to consider the needs of cyclists when they are undertaking business developments.</p> <p>During the Market Town Welcome process a number of related actions/activities were identified for cycling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the feasibility of a cycle path alongside the A69 to Greenhead • Join up the two sections of the Haltwhistle cycleway (Greenhead to Gilsland) • Provision and promotion of more cycle racks in Haltwhistle and villages • Provision of training, facilities and support for visitors and residents to cycle in the area.
Cost	

Lead Delivery Organisation	Northumberland Strategic Partnership & CycleTRAX
Other Partners	Hadrian's Wall Heritage, Northumberland Tourism, Haltwhistle Partnership
Key Issues	Continuation of the current cycle hub project (NSP funded) Gaining support within the town Gaining support and input from local businesses
Timetable	Quick Win, less than 12 months
Next Steps	This action is somewhat dependent on the Cycling Hub study that has been funded by NSP. However, there are some actions that can be done locally which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating support for the concept of a cycling hub • Encouraging accommodation providers/local businesses to consider the needs of cyclists e.g. accommodation providers having equipment to repair a puncture.

Food and Drink

Action	Improvements to the quality and range of food and drink on offer around Haltwhistle and changes to opening hours/serving times
Project Number	5.1 & 5.2
Description	<p>The town audit and discussions with local people revealed that there are some problems regarding the food and drink offer within Haltwhistle. The 'lack of good eating places' was highlighted as a dislike about the town by respondents in the business survey and was also picked up in the 2003 visitor survey. In addition early evening food offer tends to be limited to either the takeaways or pubs.</p> <p>The Leadership Group identified the need for work to be done with local restaurateurs in order to raise the quality and range of food on offer within the town. This could range from highlighting the dissatisfaction amongst visitors with the food and drink on offer in the town, through to holding food masterclasses on how businesses could improve.</p> <p>The town will need to link into Northumberland wide food and drink initiatives which could also help to improve the food and drink offer within the town.</p> <p>This work could tie in with action 5.3 to encourage restaurants and cafés to better promote the use of local produce.</p>
Cost	Small
Lead Delivery Organisation	Haltwhistle Partnership & Chamber of Trade
Other Partners	Northumberland Tourism, Made in Northumberland
Key Issues	<p>Apathy by local businesses</p> <p>Concern from businesses that any change will not be profitable/lose money</p>
Timetable	Quick Win – Short
Next Steps	Work with local restaurants and café's to explain the current problems and investigate whether joint solutions can be reached.

Town Appearance

Action	Implementing a targeted town improvement scheme and enhancing the market area
Project Number	6.1 and 6.9
Description	Haltwhistle Partnership is committed to implementing the recommendations and actions highlighted in the Retail Distinctiveness Action Plan. In particular they are focusing on improving the town's appearance through work on shop front improvements and also looking to improve the market place area and the surrounding shops. These schemes will help to smarten up the main retail area of the town and make it more welcoming to visitors
Cost	£400,000
Lead Delivery Organisation	Haltwhistle Partnership
Other Partners	Northumberland Strategic Partnership, One North East, Local Authority
Key Issues	Availability of funding to progress the work Support from local businesses and landlords
Timetable	Quick Win, Less than 12 months
Next Steps	

Marketing and Promotion

Action	Strengthen promotional and marketing linkages between Haltwhistle and Hadrian's Wall
Project Number	7.1
Description	<p>As discussed previously, Hadrian's Wall is the biggest draw to tourists in this area of Northumberland. Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited is responsible for marketing the Wall and increasing visits to the site by 10% and it is therefore important that Haltwhistle works with this organisation to ensure that Haltwhistle is included in wider Hadrian's Wall literature and marketing materials and its central location on the Wall is emphasised. Currently there is a feeling amongst businesses that the Hadrian's Wall literature has little to say about Haltwhistle.</p> <p>As Hadrian's Wall is a recognised 'brand' and attraction across the UK, Haltwhistle could look for ways of linking marketing for the town into the wider marketing for Hadrian's Wall and Hadrian's Wall Country.</p> <p>It is also important that Haltwhistle work with both the private and public sector to ensure that there is co-ordinated marketing of the town with joined up messages. Currently there is confusion about the town – indeed on entering Haltwhistle you are greeted with signs proclaiming:</p> <p>"Centre of Roman Britain"</p> <p>"Centre of Britain"</p> <p>"Gateway to Hadrian's Wall"</p> <p>Marketing will need to bring all the strengths of the town together to communicate messages to target markets. Events, such as the Walking Festival need better promotion and could raise the town's profile significantly.</p> <p>There was some discussion around the main identity or messages for promotion for Haltwhistle. Many people would like to see the "Centre of Britain" concept used more widely to help develop a 'brand' for the town although this brand would not tie in with the Hadrian's Wall 'hook'. An alternative could be "Centre of Hadrian's Wall" or "Centre of Hadrian's Wall Country" which could be developed to deliver the message that Haltwhistle is a central base from which you can access a number of attractions, activities and towns.</p> <p>One suggestion for better joint working between Hadrian's Wall Heritage and Haltwhistle was for Hadrian's Wall Heritage to locate</p>

	their offices within Haltwhistle.
Cost	
Lead Delivery Organisation	Haltwhistle Partnership
Other Partners	Northumberland Tourism, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd
Key Issues	Ensuring promotional activity is complementary to regional efforts by Northumberland Tourism Working closely with Hadrian's Wall Heritage
Timetable	Quick Win, Less than 12 months
Next Steps	Review current marketing materials for Haltwhistle and Hadrian's Wall Work with Hadrian's Wall Ltd and Northumberland Tourism to develop new materials which better promote Haltwhistle

Transport and Signage

Action	Improved Taxi provision
Project Number	8.2
Description	<p>Discussions with local businesses during the Market Town Welcome project identified there is a significant problem with the current taxi provision in the Haltwhistle area. There are currently two taxi firms operating within the Haltwhistle area but it is often very difficult to book a taxi unless there is several days notice. It was thought that this is partly down to taxis being used for the 'school run' and so they are not available for local people and visitors.</p> <p>Given the remote location of many of the villages around Haltwhistle it is essential that there is effective, affordable taxi provision to be able to take visitors to attractions or restaurants.</p>
Cost	Low
Lead Delivery Organisation	Haltwhistle Town Council
Other Partners	Local Authority, Local Taxi Operators
Key Issues	Taxi operators unwilling to co-operate
Timetable	Quick Win, Less than 12 months
Next Steps	It has been proposed that the town talk to the local taxi operators or to Tynedale Council to see if some arrangement can be made to ensure there is adequate taxi provision for the area.

Community and Co-ordination

Action	Employment of a Tourism Co-ordinator
Project Number	9.1
Description	<p>The town recognises that there is a lot to do if it is to fully realise its potential as a tourism destination. The town does have a number of strengths as there are many things in and around Haltwhistle that would be of interest to visitors, however, there is a need for effective marketing, promotion and co-ordination of these to publicise Haltwhistle and what it has to offer more effectively.</p> <p>The Leadership Group feel there is a need to employ a tourism co-ordinator on a long term contract (e.g. five years) to drive forward the actions set out in this Destination Plan who has the expertise in marketing and promotion and also working with many different partners to implement many of the actions identified in this Plan.</p> <p>Activities that the Co-ordinator would be responsible for would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint working and co-ordination with Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd • Better marketing linked to Hadrian's Wall • Promotion of existing facilities and attractions e.g. market, swimming pool etc • Development and promotion of town activities and events that tourists would enjoy • Encourage town groups to put on talks and fun things in summer evenings • Developing a website for visitors • Working with local businesses <p>The co-ordinator could also take responsibility for improvements to the food and drink on offer in the town, improvements for walking and cycling, communication between key partners and organisations and support and training for local businesses.</p>
Cost	£180,000
Lead Delivery Organisation	Haltwhistle Partnership
Other Partners	Northumberland Strategic Partnership, One NorthEast
Key Issues	Ensuring funding for a five year period
Timetable	Quick Win, Less than 12 months
Next Steps	Convene a steering group

	<p>Identify the tasks/priorities for the Co-ordinator role</p> <p>Develop job description for the position</p> <p>Identify/source funding for the position</p>
--	--

Business Support and Training

Action	Development and roll-out of Passport to Northumberland training to all accommodation providers, businesses and TIC Staff
Project Number	10.5
Description	<p>The Leadership Group recognise that the area is rich in history and this is what attracts many visitors to the area. It was suggested that accommodation providers and other businesses that are in contact with visitors could undertake training so that they can provide visitors with information about the local history of the area.</p> <p>Northumberland National Park already runs a similar training programme for front of house tourism professionals and others involved in delivering services called Passport to Northumberland. The seminars provide opportunities for participants to learn about the special qualities, attractions and outdoor recreation opportunities in the two protected landscapes. As ambassadors for the Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Park they will be able to pass this learning on to visitors.</p> <p>It has been proposed to develop the Passport to Northumberland scheme further to incorporate the history and heritage of the area into the training scheme. The scheme could also provide the orientation visits that are proposed as project 10.1.</p>
Cost	
Lead Delivery Organisation	Northumberland National Park
Other Partners	Northumberland Tourism, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd, Haltwhistle Partnership
Key Issues	Availability of funding
Timetable	Short
Next Steps	<p>Meet with Northumberland National Park to understand the current Passport scheme and see how this can be developed</p> <p>Identify modules/areas of training that would be useful</p> <p>Identify potential costs of scheme and possible sources of funding</p>

6.3. Investment Opportunities

The Market Town Welcome process has identified possible opportunities for tourism development should an investor be interested in investing in the town. These are:

- Tourism development site on the A69

- Need for a medium sized hotel
- Bistro/mid-price restaurant
- Craft shop
- Taxi provision

6.4. Cross County Projects

As the Destination Plans developed it was clear that there were many common themes between the emerging priorities in each town. The same issues cropped up in many towns and opportunities for joint working to address many of these emerged. So for example while a particular town may want to improve a local walking route there will also be scope to link it into a wider network and to undertake a joint promotion to walkers.

The themes where there is potential for joined up action across the towns are:

- Outdoor activities - walking/cycling, watersports, nature based tourism
- History and heritage
- Food and drink
- Art, culture and events
- Business support and training
- Planning, infrastructure and destination management
- Promotion of investment opportunities

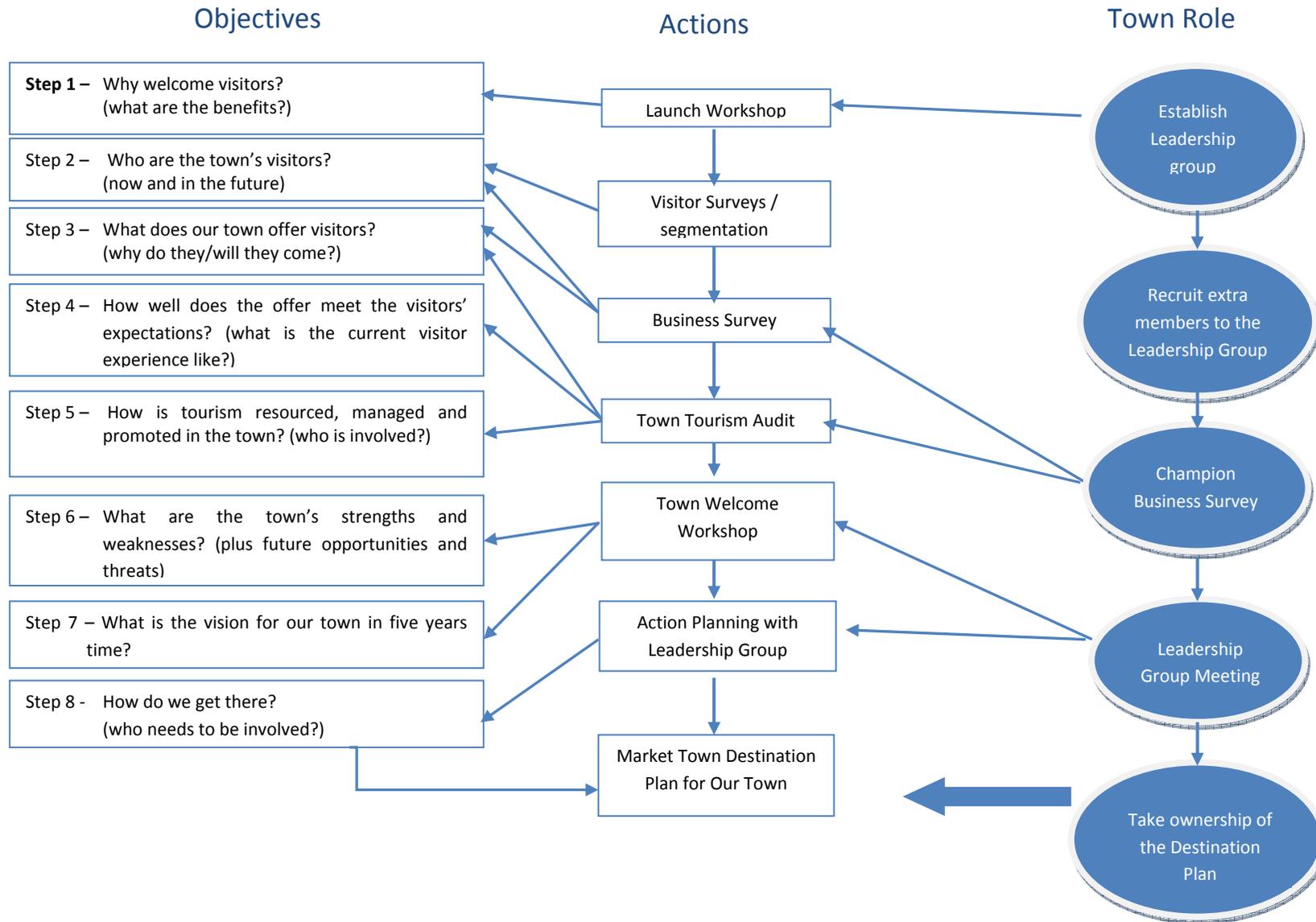
Haltwhistle has an opportunity to participate in many of the joint initiatives proposed which are detailed in the Market Town Welcome Over-arching report. In particular it is in a good position to be involved in collaborative projects regarding **Walking and Cycling** and **History and Heritage** as this is where its strengths lie.

The advent of a new unitary authority opens up opportunities to develop broader approaches to issues such as car parking, promoting investment opportunities and promoting public transport. There may be scope for county based initiative for developing volunteer capacity in events organisation. There is definitely demand for workshops and training for the tourism sector which could be organised across the county and help businesses network.

The partner organisations need to maintain close links with Northumberland Strategic Partnership, Northumberland Tourism and One North East to ensure they can take part in and capitalise upon any collaborative projects. They should also agitate for projects which help them better deliver this action plan.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Destination Management Plan Template



2. Appendix 2 - Organisations and Individuals

Miller Research would like to thank the following individuals for their input to the Market Town Welcome process in Haltwhistle.

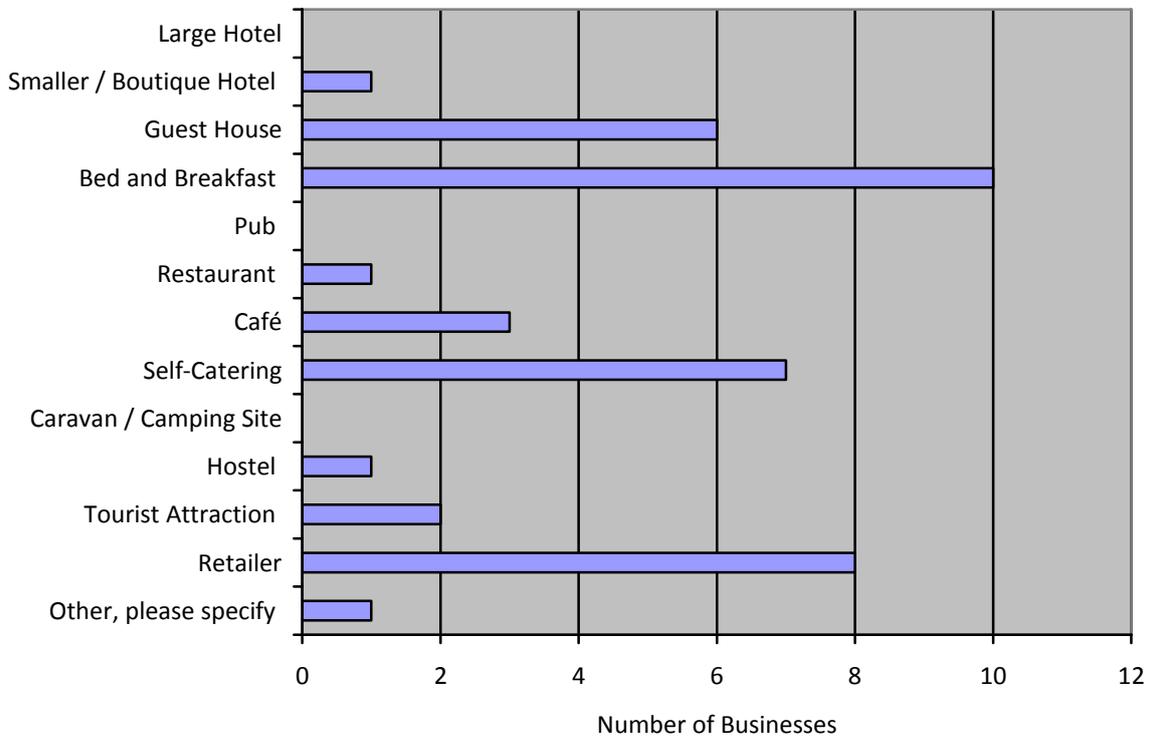
Jackie Armstrong	Grindon Cartshed
DA and WA Armstrong	Armstrong Carpets
Roger Ashman	Tantallon House
M W Bell	Billy Bell
Wendy Bond	Hadrian's Wall Farmers Market
Peggy Birch	Local Resident
Keith Burdis	Eskdale Cottage
Gillian Cowell	Haltwhistle Partnership
John Clark	Featherstone Castle
C Davidson	Armstrong Fashion and Bridal
Ruth Dodds	Community Enterprise Officer, Northumberland National Park
Kath Dowle	Saughy Rigg Farm
Tim Doyle	Local Resident
James Fell	Tourist Information Manager, Tynedale Council
Jackie Fleming	Chair, Haltwhistle Chamber of Trade & proprietor of Pillar Box Café
Angela Frayne	Strand Cottage B&B
Tamara Gilbert	Tynedale Council
John Heslop	Haltwhistle Chamber of Trade and proprietor of Beano's Sandwich bar
Diane Horn	Slack House Organic Farm
Geoff James	Ashcroft Guest House
Christine James	Intrim Hair Design
Nigel Jarvis	Four Wynds Guesthouse
Gemma Lawson	Northumberland Tourism
Vineet Lal	Hadrian's Wall Heritage
Sue Leeming	Crescent House and Crescent Cottage
Kathleen Liddell	Haltwhistle Chamber of Trade
Ted Liddle	Cycle TRAX
David Livesey	Yew Tree Chapel

Liam McNulty	Willowford Farm B&B
Joanna Myers	The Old Forge Tearooms
Ann Newby	Ald White Craig Farm
Linda Ogle	Haltwhistle Tourism Association and Wydon Farm B&B
Brett Pattison	Oceans
Emma Reed	Moss Kennels B&B
Gary Reed	Hadrian's Wall Ltd
Tracey Reed	Hadrian's Wall Ltd
Kirsty Robinson	Haltwhistle Town Councillor
Dr. Graham Ridley	Haltwhistle Partnership
Cameron Scott	Economic Regeneration, Tynedale Council
Alan Sharp	Haltwhistle Partnership and Haltwhistle Town Council
Richard Skeet	Richard Skeet Electricals
Pauline Staff	Holmhead Guesthouse
David Taylor	Centre of Britain Hotel
Lesley Teasdale	Kellah Farm Accommodation
Fiona Watson	The Vindolanda Trust
Lindsey Welsh	Ensemble
Nick Wright	Chare Close B&B

3. Appendix 3 – Business Survey Results

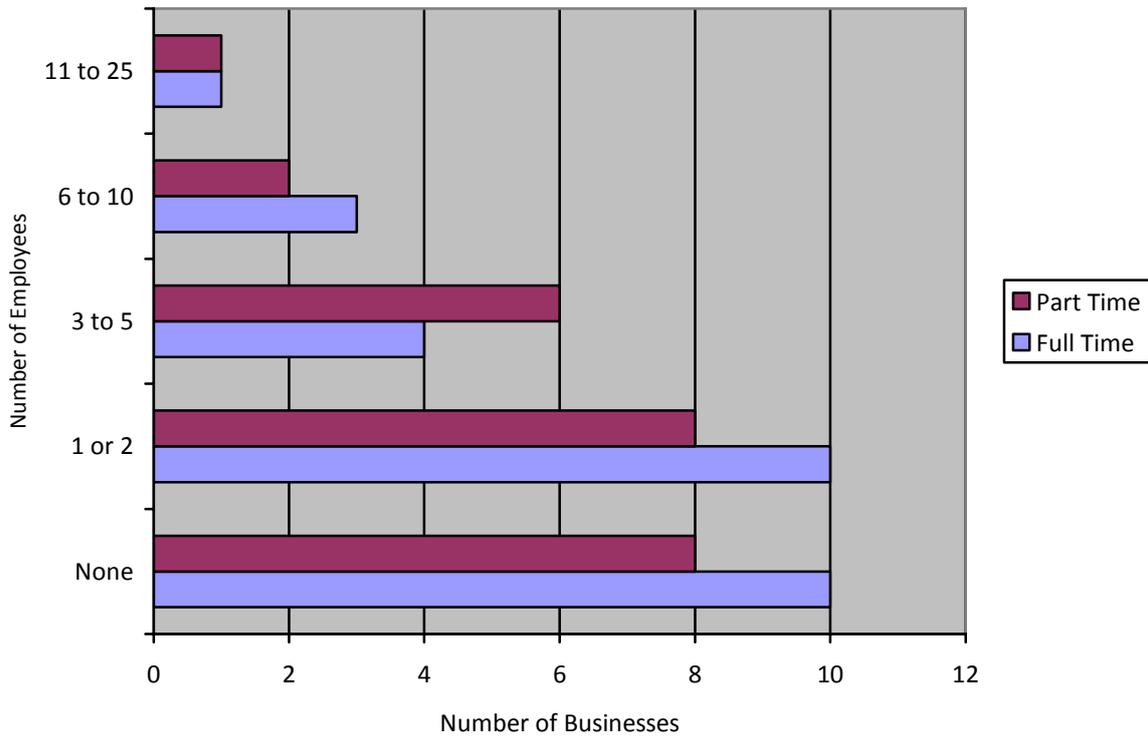
32 Businesses responded to the survey in Haltwhistle. The following charts give an overview of the main results:

Types of Tourism Businesses – Respondents



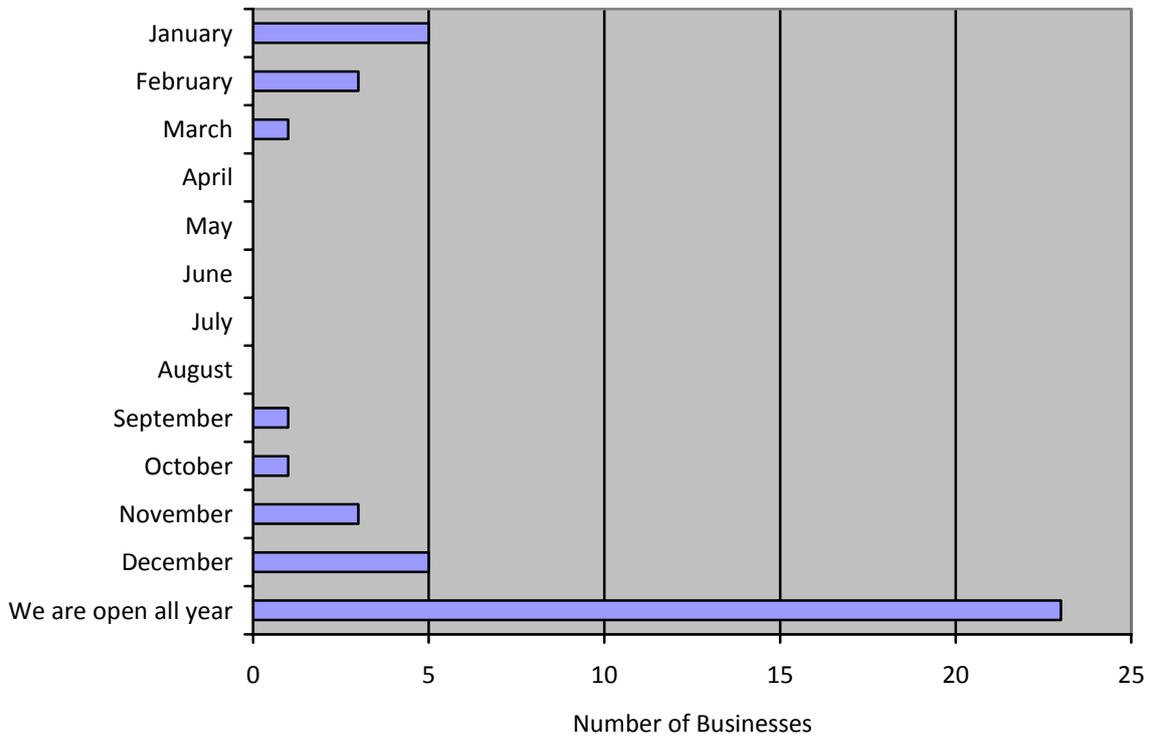
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. Base 30 respondents

How many staff do you employ on average?



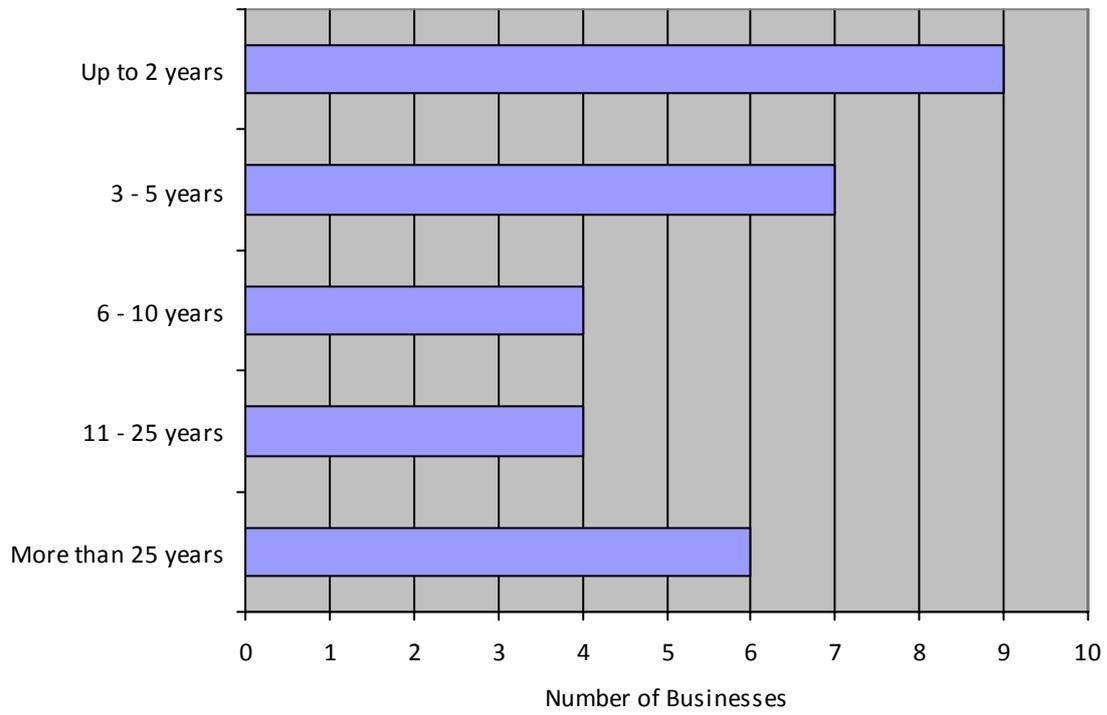
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 32 respondents

Which Months of the Year are you Closed?



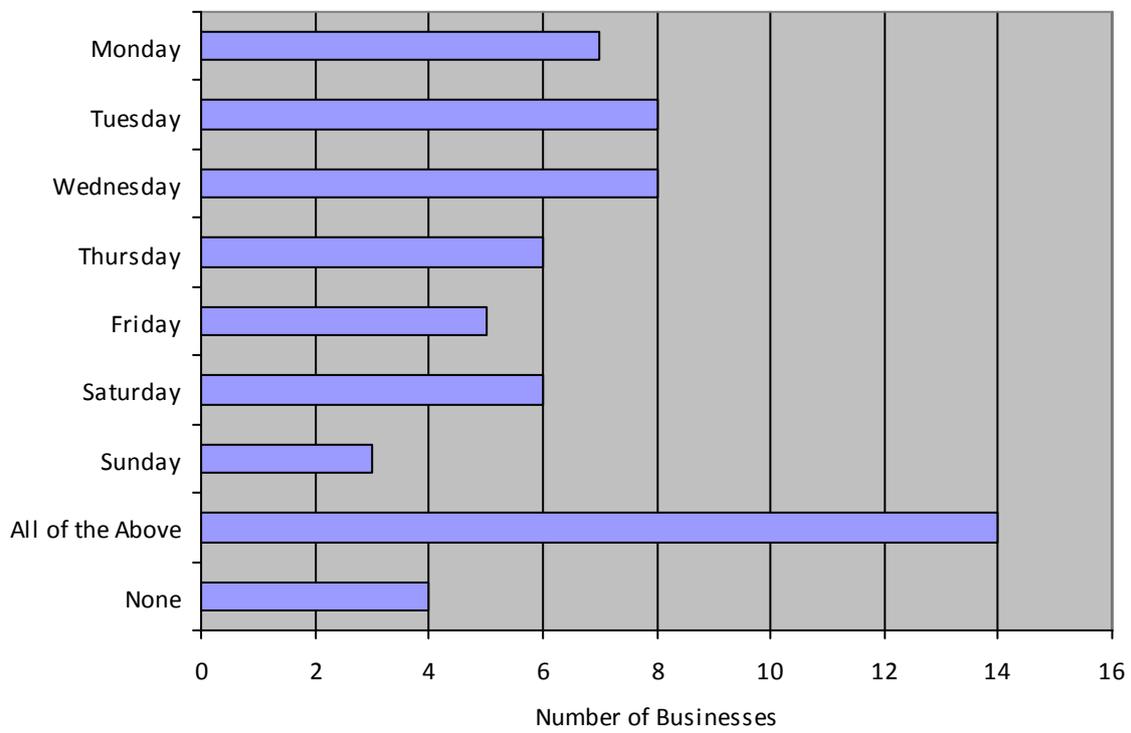
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 29 respondents

For how many years have you operated this business?



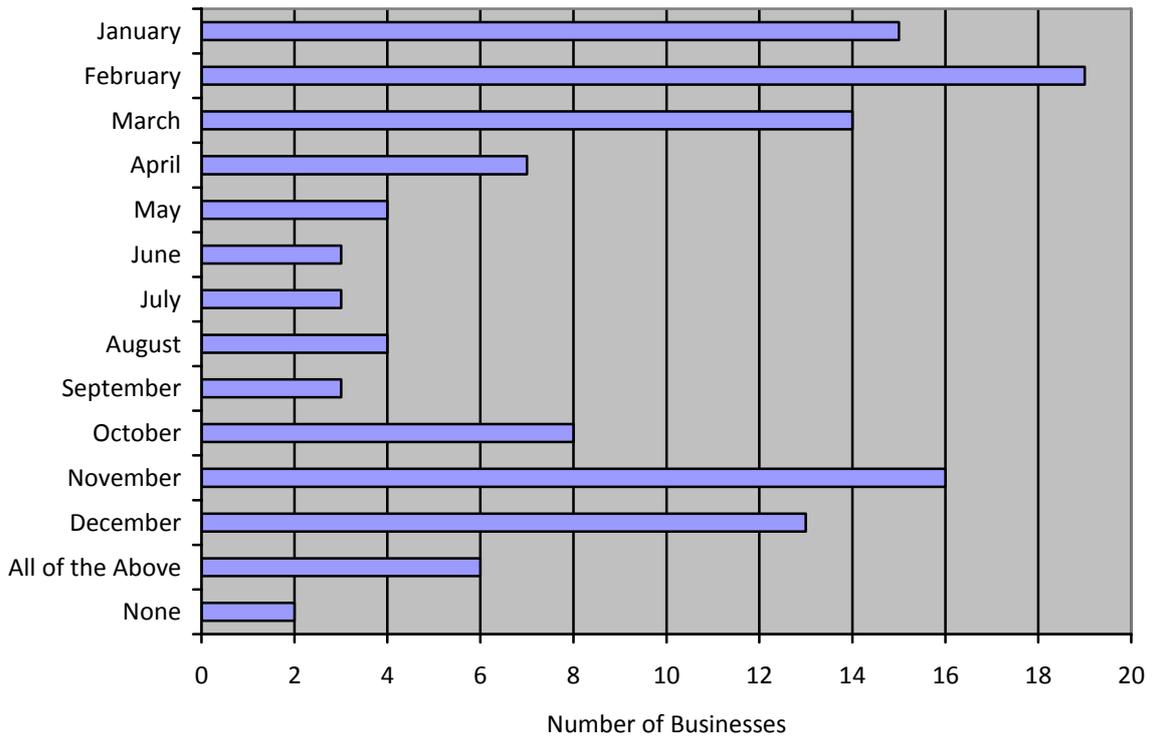
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 30 respondents

Are there any particular times of the week that you would like to see an increase in your business?



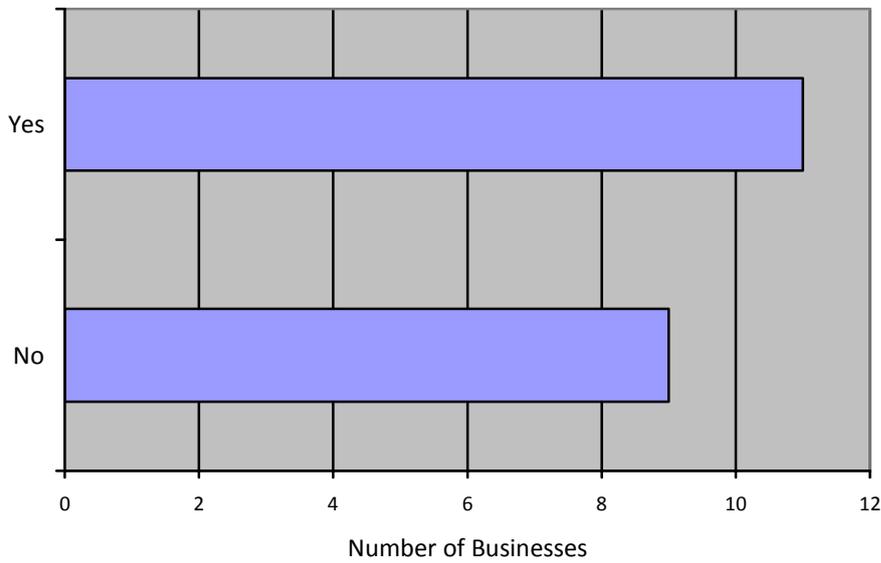
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 28 respondents

Which months would you like to see an increase in your business?



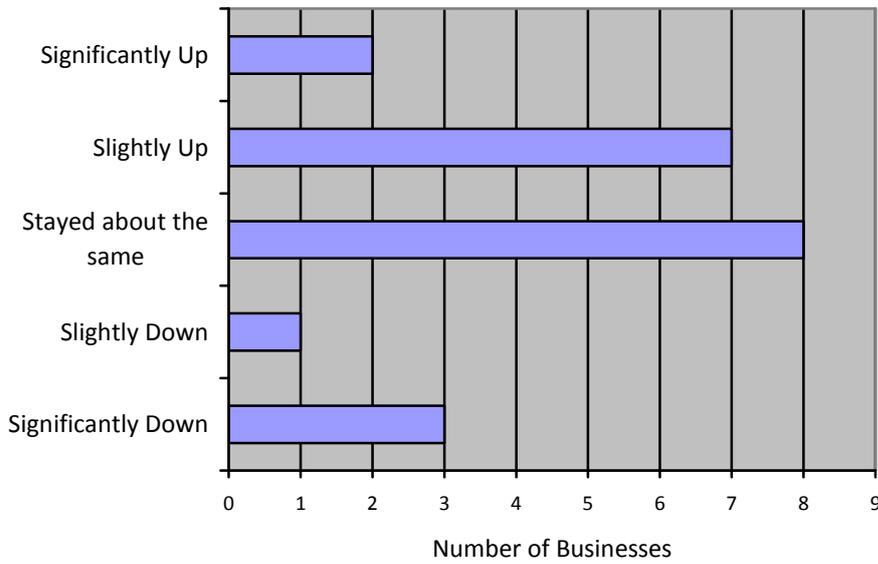
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 29 respondents

Do you have any expansion or development plans for your business?



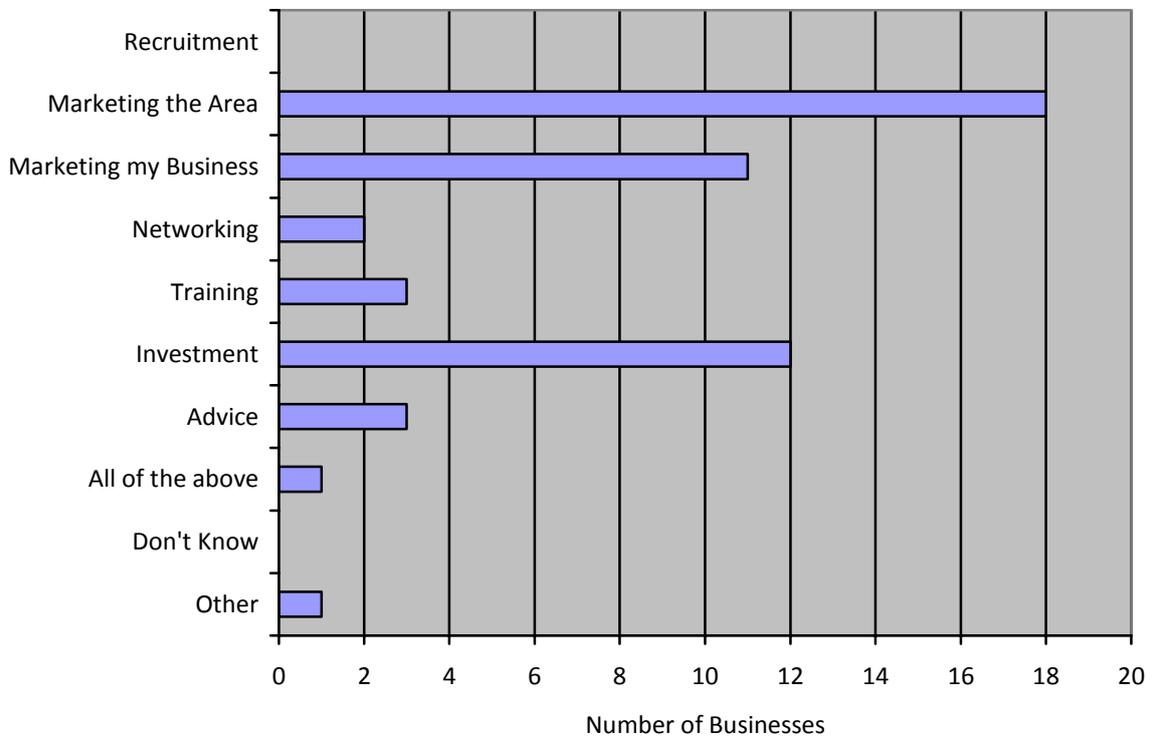
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 29 respondents

What has been the trend in your profitability in the past three years?



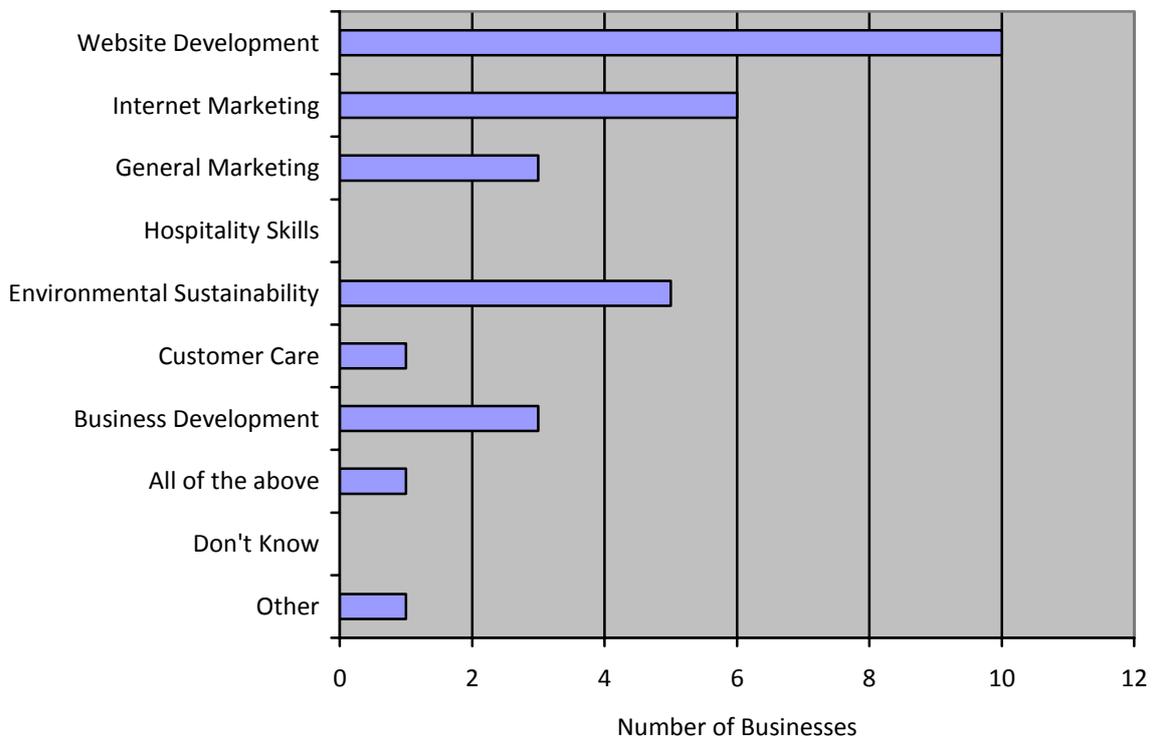
Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 22 respondents

What support from the local authorities, tourism bodies or other organisations would be of greatest benefit to you in the development of your business?



Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 26 respondents

Are there any specific training needs which would benefit your own business, your staff, or other operators in the wider area?



Source: Market Town Welcome Business Survey. 18= respondents

4. Appendix 4 - Segmentation

4.1. Functionals

Outlook

- Functionals are very resistant to spending and appear pretty self reliant.
- They are very price driven and value functionality strongly over style.
- They are very traditional in their values, and are not prepared to pay for fashion, style or “individuality”.
- Service is something that they expect as opposed to something they will pay extra for.
- Whilst they are not early adopters they are interested in new experiences, and are happy to try new things.
- They also enjoy intellectual challenges, arts and culture.

Interests and Activities

- **Personal interests** – DIY, gardening, arts & culture.
- **Days out and attractions** – Interested in heritage attractions. Seeking a nostalgic and somewhat educational experience.
- **Shopping** – Higher propensity to use the lower cost supermarkets e.g. co-op. Budget clothes shops are used and a low amount spent on clothes purchases.
- **Eating & drinking** – Lower propensity to eat and drink out compared to other segments. Price & functionality is important. Social clubs or Weatherspoons pubs are favoured drinking establishments (price sensitive).
- **Nights out** – Most likely to be a trip to the cinema or a trip to the theatre.
- **Media** – Mail & Telegraph are the most popular newspapers. Lowest proportion of all segments owning satellite/ cable TV. Into news, films and comedy.
- **Holidays** – Most likely to choose a specialist operator or an independent holiday company. Unlikely to use a dedicated internet holiday company but quite likely to book accommodation online & arrange travel themselves. Low frequency of holiday taking and most likely to do a short break in the UK and a longer holiday overseas.

4.2. Habituals

Outlook

- The Habitual segment is most likely to value a more relaxed pace of life.
- They are strongly traditional, and very resistant to any expenditure. Though this is possibly a reflection of their poor means.

- They are probably strongly resistant to change.
- They will make purchase decisions on function rather than style. Fashion has little value to this group.
- They are also very risk averse and show little interest in new options or opportunities.
- This group has and spends little money, not for brands or for service. They find it hard to justify expense of any sort.
- They have no interest in arts or culture.

Interests and Activities

- **Shopping** – Not really big on shopping. They are not interested in fashion or new technology. Being of lower income then they tend to shop in the perceived cheaper stores e.g. Costcutter, Budgens & Morrisons.
- **Days out and attractions** – Prefer to go to heritage based attractions that involve of bit of investigation. They are looking for a peaceful and relaxing experience from their days out. Transport museums appeal to this segment.
- **Eating and drinking** – Do not eat out very often but when they do they are drawn to traditional establishments like Harry Ramsdens, Beefeater or Toby Carvery.
- **Holidays** – This segment is least likely to take a holiday. If they do then they are likely to go to a familiar destination that they have been to before and it has to be cheap. It is more likely to be in the UK than abroad.
- **Media** – This segment is the one who watches TV the most and their favourite type of programme is the news. In terms of newspaper readership they favour paid for local papers ahead of the Daily Mail and the Sun.

4.3. Traditionals.

Outlook

- Traditionals are a main stream market. Their members are relatively self reliant and internally referenced with possible tendencies towards being sustainers.
- Brand is not a key purchase driver for this segment but it does not mean that they are brand averse.
- They are more likely to hold traditional values.
- Functionality is far more important than style and they are not swayed by products with style and individuality, although they will still go for something out of the ordinary.
- They value good service, and this is something that they will pay for, especially in terms of individual attention.
- They are unlikely to justify spending on expensive alternatives.
- They live life at a relaxed pace and enjoy intellectual challenges, arts and culture.

Interests and Activities

- **Days out and attractions** - those that are geared towards heritage and investigation will appeal to the Traditionals. This includes National Trust attractions, churches and cathedrals and botanical gardens.
- They are looking for days out and attractions that are peaceful & relaxing, nostalgic and educational.
- **Personal interests** - include gardening and arts and culture.
- **Eating & Drinking** - For Traditionals, the traditional pub is the type of eating and drinking establishment that holds the greatest appeal.
- **A good night out** - for this segment would be going for a drink or a meal out.
- **Holidays** – Being an older segment, they are most likely to use Saga but also domestic niche operators (e.g. English Country Cottages). They are also most likely to use the telephone for booking.
- A good short break for Traditionals would give them the chance to escape, slow down and do their own thing.
- **Media** – Enjoy news, history and nature programmes on TV.

4.4. Cosmopolitans

Jake and Tamsin

Outlook

- Strong, active and confident.
- Do what they want rather than follow any particular fashion.
- Stylish people but it is individuality rather than fashion that is important to them.
- Comfortable trying new things that are out of the ordinary.
- Happy to adopt traditional values when appropriate.
- Early adopters but this is generally based on their personal interest in new products and opportunities rather than on fashion trends. A result of this is that they are early to try out new products, especially in the field of new technology.
- Value and seek functionality in their purchases.
- High-spending market and find it easy to justify buying expensive alternatives.
- To be given individual attention is very important for Cosmopolitans and they are willing to pay for it.
- Are risk takers and this is reflected in their purchases and their desire for things that are new and different. They like new challenges, both physical and intellectual.
- Have an appreciation of art and culture.

- Life for this group is full and active, yet peace and relaxation is still valued in the right circumstances.

Interests and Activities

- **Personal interests** - Cosmopolitans like shopping, cooking and arts and culture.
- **Days out and attractions** - Cosmopolitans have a slight bias towards heritage and arts or cultural attractions. Their active nature is also reflected in the fact that they have a strong appeal towards days out in the “great outdoors” – this could be visits to a National Park, a walk in the country side or a day at the beach. The atmosphere that they are looking for in a day out is something that is educational and something that is mentally challenging.
- **Shopping** - Cosmopolitans spend a lot of money on clothes and up market fashion chains (e.g. GAP) are where they are likely to be found. They also like places to shop that have a strong independent sector (e.g. antique shops or specialist shops).
- **Eating & drinking** - Cosmopolitans are the segment to eat out most often and are drawn to new, self found, or non-chain restaurants. Wine bars are popular for drinking.
- **Nights out** - Cosmopolitans have a range of nights out that appeal and these include comedy, cabaret, theatre and ballet.
- **Media** – Into films, news and comedy. Less time spent viewing TV than the majority of other segments.
- **Holidays** – Most likely segment to use the long haul and more independent operators (e.g. Kuoni, Expedia, Trailfinders or cruise operators).
- A good short break for a Cosmopolitan allows them to escape, do their own thing and expand their knowledge or experience.

4.5. Discoverers

Adrian and Chloe

Outlook

- Discoverers as the name suggests are independent of Mind.
- They are the group least likely to be worried about what others might think.
- They are little influenced by style or brand unless it represents values they are seeking.
- Function far out rates style as a purchase driver.
- Quite high spenders, and value new products and services as well as new experiences.
- They will judge their value for themselves. If the product suits their needs and is right then they will spend their money.
- They value good service.
- They live a relatively relaxed pace of life.

- They enjoy intellectual challenges but arts and culture are not really an important part of who they are.

Interests and Activities

- **Personal interests** - Include attending sporting events, computer games and DIY.
- **Days out and attractions** - Discoverers are drawn towards attractions that are geared towards investigation and amusement. This could include attractions such as zoos, science museums or living history attractions. They want to be fascinated and absorbed by their days out and go for something out of the ordinary.
- **A good night out** - would involve live music.
- **Shopping** - a discoverer is looking for something that is different from the norm and is more likely to be attracted towards markets.
- **Eating and drinking** - the types of eating and drinking establishments that appeal to a Discoverer are modern, functional but service orientated (e.g. Ha Ha Bar & Canteen, Bar Med). This segment eats out frequently.
- **Media** – Have a wide variety of interests when it comes to TV viewing including films, sport, nature comedy and science programmes.
- **Holidays** – Independent travel companies (e.g. Trailfinders) appeal to this segment. They are a group likely to holiday off the beaten track or try to learn something new on their holiday. One of the least likely segments to book a package holiday.
- A good short break for a Discoverer allows them time to themselves, a chance to escape and the opportunity to expand their knowledge and experiences.

5. Appendix 5 - Tourism Audit

5.1. Reasons for the audit

This audit is an important part of the Market Town Welcome Programme. It will help each market town to appreciate its current tourism offer and interest to visitors, as well as identifying problems, potential gaps and opportunities for future developments. By collecting the same information for each town we can give evidence of comparative strengths and weaknesses.

Many businesses contribute to the tourism appeal of a market town. So, the audit covers not only accommodation providers and attractions, but also specialist retailers, markets, sports, countryside and cultural facilities. It is also important to consider the visitor's experience from their arrival in the town for the first time and how they find their way around the town. Therefore we will consider infrastructure issues such as signposting, car parking, toilet provision and information availability in the town. Studies have shown that they can significantly affect the quality of the visit and influence whether the visitor returns.

The information collected was fed into workshops being held in each town in early March to inform discussions about the town's special character, its strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be improved.

5.2. Definition of the Market Town Area

Haltwhistle is defined within an approximate radius of 6 miles from the town edge, which includes the hamlets/settlements of Greenhead, Gilsland, Featherstone, Lambley, Henshaw, Bardon Mill, Kellah, Coanwood, Park Village, Plenmeller, and Melkridge.

5.3. Audit Results

Accommodation

	Number	No. of bedspaces, units or pitches	Number officially quality inspected
Hotels	1	26 bedspaces	1
Guesthouses/B&Bs	24	203 bedspaces	21
Inns or pubs with accommodation	3	30 bedspaces	2
Self-Catering businesses	22	41 units	16
Caravan & Camping sites	6	312 pitches	4
Youth or other hostels	5	90	3
Other group accommodation			

Are there any particular gaps in the type or quality of accommodation for the size of your town?

There isn't a hotel large enough to take a coach party.

Attractions

Please include all sites which would be of interest to visitors, adding additional rows as necessary.

	Names	Opening days/months	Your quality score*
Historic houses, castles	Thirlwall Castle (ruins of)	7 days per week	3
	POW Camp (Featherstone)		
Museums, heritage centres	Roman Army Museum	Daily, mid February - end of March 10:00am - 5:00pm, April - September 10:00am - 6:00pm, October - mid November 10:00am - 5:00pm (2005).	3
	Vindolanda	Daily, Feb & Nov 10am – 5pm, Apr-Sept 10am – 6pm, Jan & Dec 10am – 4pm	4
Churches of interest to visitors	Holy Cross Church (13 th century with William Morris & Burn Jones windows)	2-4pm Thurs & Sat from Easter to end Sept	3
Animal/wildlife attractions inc. nature reserves	River South Tyne (Angling)	All year	4
	Allenbanks	All year	4
	Greenlee Lough		
Farm attractions	Herding Hill Farm Shop and Coffee Shop	Shop selling locally reared rare breed meat plus a selection of other local produce –	3

		also on sale in café	
Gardens			
Railway, transport attractions			
Country parks, woodlands, special countryside sites	Walltown Picnic Site Cawfields Picnic Site		4 3
	Haltwhistle Burn	Footpath of 2.5miles from town up to the Military Road (close to Hadrian's Wall at Cawfields)	3
Craft centres			
Other	Hadrian's Wall (Housesteads Fort)	Daily 10am – 4pm Winter, and 10am - 6pm Summer	3/4
	Once Brewed		3

* Also mark any which have an official quality grading from the Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme

Festivals and Events

List regular or annual festivals and events which will be of interest to visitors, in calendar order, using extra lines if necessary.

Date	Event	Details
26 April to 5 May 08	Spring Walking Festival	Walking festival which includes 10 days of walks guided by local volunteers.
11 – 19 October 08	Autumn Walking Festival	As above.
15 – 20 Sep 08	Sights & Sounds Festival	A week long exhibition of local crafts in Holy Cross Church and a series of musical events at various venues in town.
Mar – Sep	Roman Market	A local produce market on 3 rd Saturday of each month
May	Plant Festival	A weekend of plant sales and an open garden trail
28 June to 6	Haltwhistle Carnival	A week long series of events culminating on the final Sunday with a Carnival Queen,

July		decorated floats, a fun fair and loads of stalls/crafts on the carnival field.
-------------	--	--

Are there any gaps, for example at particular times of the year *There are no events from November to February.*

Does the range of events match the types of interests that visitors have? *Not enough on crafts.*

Retail

Those towns which took part in the Retail Distinctiveness Programme will be able to use that information to complete this sheet. Note only those shops which will be of particular interest to visitors. In smaller towns that is likely to include food shops, but in larger towns focus on speciality shopping rather than the whole retail sector.

Shops

Retail type	No. of shops	Names (omit if too many to list)
	36	
Speciality Food		Billy Bell Frere Quenelle liqueurs RH Thompson and WMH Farm Fresh Meat.
Antiques	0	
Books	1	Newcastle Book Shop
Arts / Crafts	1	Ensemble (handmade jewellery)
Gift	1	La Toot (café and giftshop)
Outdoor/Leisure		Hadrians Wall Ltd (Water Tower building)
Clothing		Liddell's Footwear, Armstrong Fashion and Bridal Edens Lawn Garage
Garden centres/ nurseries		
Other Speciality or 'destination' shops		

Markets

Market type	Regularity	day(s) of week	5	4	3	2	1
Outdoor	Weekly	Thursday					x
Indoor							
Speciality							

Eating out

	Names (omit if too many to list)
Restaurants	Fort Restaurant (more of a café than a restaurant) Centre of Britain Hotel
Take-aways	Oceans Lucky Palace Haltwhistle Tandoori Takeaway and pizzeria
Cafes/tea shops	Pillar Box Café Beanos La Toot Brew & Browse
Pubs serving food	The Wallace Arms Milecastle Inn Black Bull Manor House Hotel
Other	

Are there any particular gaps in the retail and catering offer of your town for a town of its size?

Not a great range of gifts/local crafts for visitors to shop for.

Very poor early evening offer of food – limited to the takeaways or pubs.

Some cafes close all day on Wednesday.

No bistro style food on offer.

Sports, outdoor activity and entertainment facilities

Please note all facilities which are available for visitors (i.e. not private clubs etc). Add extra rows as necessary.

Facility	Name	Brief details	Quality grading				
			5	4	3	2	1
Leisure centre/ gym	Haltwhistle Heated Open Air Swimming Pools & Leisure Centre	Open 7 days per week from 9.00am.			x		
Swimming pool	Haltwhistle Heated Open Air Swimming Pools & Leisure Centre	Open 7 days per week from end of May to beginning of September.	x				
Golf	Haltwhistle Golf Club	Between Greenhead & Gilsland.					
Long distance footpaths	Pennine Way Hadrian's Wall Path						
Other named walks	Haltwhistle Rings	22 local walks					
Bicycle hire	Hadrian's Wall Ltd (Water Tower)						
Cycle routes	Pennine Cycleway Hadrian Cycleway Plus 10 do in a day	Both part of the Sustrans network.					
Riding/pony trekking							
Special riding routes							
Fishing	Haltwhistle & District Angling Association	Has daily, weekly and season tickets available for visitors, for trout, salmon, and sea trout fishing. There are approximately 10 miles of river set in					

		the picturesque river South Tyne Valley, and with visitor tickets starting at £20.					
Sailing							
Canoeing							
Other outdoor activities, sports	Haltwhistle Bowling Club						
Theatre							
Cinema*							
Other entertainment facilities							

* include regular film showing arrangements if appropriate

Are there any particular gaps or weaknesses for a town of its size?

Little evening activity apart from pub culture. But plenty of outdoor activities.

Support facilities and infrastructure

Car parking

	Free	Short stay	Long stay
No. of car parks	6 (including 2 coop supermarket – 2 hrs limit but not checked)		
No. of spaces in total	120		
	Free	Metered	

On street parking places (approx)	30		
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Coach Parking

	Location	capacity
Location(s) for dropping off passengers	Market Place	
Location(s) for coach parking	None (Tyne Valley Coaches have own premises on Eden's Lawn bypass)	
Estimated no. of coaches visiting the town each week?	?	
Any related issues?		
<i>No accommodation large enough to accommodate coach parties overnight. Very limited space in cafes to cope with a sudden influx of coach visitors.</i>		

Other transport facilities

No's and locations of bicycle racks/storage	3 (one set for 5 bikes at railway station; two large hoops adjacent HSBC on Market Place; 3 bike places at Coop/Sainsbury supermarket) None signposted as such.
Location of central bus station/shelter	None
Facilities available at bus station/shelter	None
No. of daily buses linking to other towns	Hourly in each direction (Newcastle to the east and Carlisle to the west)
Distance from town centre to nearest railway station	100 yards

Public toilets

Toilet location	Main Street		
Opening hours	Not listed (but presume daylight hours)		

free/paid	Free		
disabled access yes/no	Yes		
baby changing yes/no	No		

Are there any particular weaknesses or gaps for a town of its size?

Bike racks are not well supplied or signposted – lack of coach parking

Visitor Information Centre

Visitor / Tourist Information Centres (VICs/TICs) are the public face of tourism. They provide a vital role both in the planning of visits to the destination and influencing activity once the visitor has arrived, thus encouraging longer stays and increased spend. They also play an important role in providing an information service to residents and hence support the key Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market.

Does your town have a VIC/ TIC?	Yes	If not, where is your nearest centre?	
Location	Railway Station Station Road Northumberland NE49 9HN	Contact Name	
Telephone Number	+44 (0)1434 322 002	Email Address	haltwhistletic@btconnect.com

For those towns with a VIC/TIC, please compile the most recent figures available

Enquiry type:	Total Number of Enquiries		
	2005	2006	2007
Counter			
Postal			
Telephone			
Email			
Accommodation bookings			

Please estimate proportions of enquiries from each of:

	%
Local residents	50
UK visitors	
Overseas visitors	

Visitor Information Needs

What are the most frequent information requests that you receive from visitors and potential visitors?	
1	Hadrian's Wall Information
2	Local walks, maps, etc
3	Train and bus times
4	UK other destinations
5	Accommodation

Are there gaps in the current information available to meet these requests? If so, what further types of information would be useful?

How well does the town meet the needs and expectations of visitors and what improvements are needed to better meet their requirements?

Tourist Information Points (TIPs)

TIPs are the notice or information boards which provide useful information for visitors such as a map of where they are and things to see and do. They are often located in car parks, town centres or key sites. Please survey and include details of those in your town, using additional columns if necessary.

Number in town:

2

Locations	On building	Land wall	Factor facing	On front wall of railway	TIC on station
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	market place.	platform	
Content of each e.g. maps, adverts, events	General tourist information.	General tourist information.	
Is it well maintained?	Yes.	Yes.	
Who is responsible for maintenance?	TIC/Tynedale Council	TIC/Tynedale Council	
Is the content appropriate and up to date?	Yes.	Yes	
Are there any additional locations where a TIP is needed?			
<i>Main car park (adjacent supermarket)</i>			

Interpretation

Interpretative materials play a key role in providing visitors with in depth information about a town or destination – beyond basic directions and information, they tell the story of a destination, informing visitors about its history and points of interest. Interpretative materials can vary tremendously - we suggest you focus on interpretative boards/panels, wall plaques, tours/signed trails, and guided tours.

Is there any interpretation around the town?	Details
Boards or panels at key sites or on key buildings of interest	General information panel about Hadrian's Wall on station platform under fingerposts.
Plaques on specific buildings	Blue plaques on bastle houses and pele towers
Signed tours or trails around the town	No
Regular guided tours around the town	No
Other interpretation materials	None

Who is responsible for maintenance of panels, plaques and signs?

Tynedale Council

Are there any gaps where further / new interpretative materials could be provided?

Holy Cross church.

A panel detailing the reason for the fortified houses – saying what a bastle and pele tower would have looked like, who lived in them and why. More information about Border Reivers.

Better pedestrian signage up to Hadrian’s Wall – showing that it is less than 3 miles walk from town.

Visitor Pedestrian Signposting

Pedestrian signposting, usually in the form of finger posts, plays an important role in ensuring that visitors to a town centre are able to orientate themselves effectively and find their way about. Looking at every individual finger post in larger towns is potentially a complicated and time consuming task - for the audit in this case we suggest the following approach;

- Choose a maximum of four locations (and the subsequent walking route to the town centre) which are key entry points/points of arrival for visitors – i.e. the main visitor car parks, bus/railway station/ dropping off point - and assess the following points
- In smaller towns where there are fewer than four fingerposts simply assess each in turn.

	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3	Location 4
Location or start point	Railway station	Market Place	Car Park in Lanty’s Lonnen	Car Park (Supermarket)
Is there a TIP showing where you are in relation to the town centre?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Signs to the Tourist / Visitor Information Centre?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Signs to public toilets?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Signs to main visitor attraction(s)	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is there good continuity of signposts/fingerposts along the route?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Quality of Signing

Are routes clear?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are fingerposts obscured or pointing the wrong way?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are fingerposts well maintained?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any obvious gaps in terms of facilities which are not currently signed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Road signposting for visitors

Feedback from visitors suggests that visitor signposting is consistently identified as something destinations could improve. More often than not, when a first time visitor travels to a destination, advance signposting will be their first experience of the destination – so it is important to make a good first impression. Visitors particularly value brown and white visitor signing which is easy to recognise and is designed specifically for their purposes.

Perhaps more so than the previous areas of the information audit, assessing road signposting to a destination is a complex area to consider – encompassing a range of logistical, technical and road safety and highway management issues. In practical terms, the most important areas to consider are the main road routes into the market towns

- Choose a maximum of four main road routes into the market towns (if there are fewer than 4 main routes, only assess those that are appropriate), starting from the nearest strategic road or junction.
- In larger towns these routes will be assessed by travelling along the route in a car, two people are required to carry out this aspect of the audit. Drive along the route from your chosen starting point, noting details on the issues set out in the template. **Safety warning - only carry out this survey at a quiet time and in good weather. Plan your route and stops in advance. Drive carefully and be aware of traffic behind you. If any routes are hazardous for this type of survey do not undertake it yourselves but discuss signage with your highways authority.**
- In smaller towns it may be possible to complete this survey on foot - **Safety warning - again consider safety issues carefully before surveying along busy roads on foot, particularly if there is no pavement. Be especially careful if taking photographs.**

	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4
starting point	A69 from west	A69 from east	B6318 Mil Road at Milecastle Inn	B6318 Mil Road first turn from Greenhead
finishing point	Main Street			
Are there any signs on the route indicating that this is a market town of interest to visitors? <i>(this could include white on brown tourist signs, welcome signing etc)</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Are there any white on brown tourist signs?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
<i>- Record any details / location</i>	Before turn – WC, Accom, Fuel, Food, Leisure	Before turn – WC, Accom, Fuel, Food, Leisure	At turn – WC, Accom, Fuel, Food, Leisure	At turn – WC, Accom, Fuel, Food, Leisure
Signposting to the Tourist Information Centre	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
<i>- Record any details / location</i>	On the brown sign			
Signposting for main attractions?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>- Record any details / location</i>	Leisure Centre & Hadrian's Wall			
Signposting for visitor car parks?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>- Record any details / location</i>	Off Eden's Lawn public parking ¼ mile – but then			

	sign up Lanty's Lonnen is missing.			
Signposting for public toilets?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<i>- Record any details / location</i>				
Is there an out-of-town Tourist Information Point on the main road before entering/ turning off to the town?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<i>- Record any details / location</i>				
Continuity of signposting				
Where facilities are signposted, does this remain consistent along the routes?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of signing.				
Are the signs appropriately maintained	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Visually- are they clear/obscured	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Are there any out of date signs which need to be removed or rationalised	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Note details for reporting to Highway authority				

The End!

Many thanks for collecting all the information.

6. Appendix 6 – Future Visitor Experience Exercise

For each of the identified future target markets, the town conducted an exercise to identify what that market would like about the town, what they would dislike and what they would like to see in the future.

6.1. Traditionals

Likes	Dislikes	What is missing
Haltwhistle Burn Walk to Hadrian's Wall	Early closing	Indoor attraction/something to do
Hadrian's Wall within walking distance	Lack of consistency	Arts and Crafts
Centre of Britain	Lack of information	Range of places to eat
Reivers history		
Shops		
Haltwhistle Rings		
Able to visit Carlisle, Killhope, Alston, Hexham, Willington Abbey and Old Gaol.		
Openness		
Quietness		
Rural Landscape		
Holy Cross Church		

6.2. Functionals

Likes	Dislikes	What is missing
Haltwhistle Burn	Shops shut on Saturday afternoon and Sunday	Local produce outlet/co-operative
River	No market	Local food and crafts
Swimming Pool	Lack of variety for shopping	Better variety of evening food
Holy Cross Church	No bakery/deli	Picnic area
History walk around town	No souvenirs/gifts	café/tea shop open after 4pm
Walking festival	No local crafts	
Cycling		

Alston		
Roman museum/Vindolanda	army	
Hexham abbey		
Free parking		
Value for money		
Supermarket		
Friendly people		

6.3. Cosmopolitans

Likes	Dislikes	What is missing
Historic Buildings	Not meeting other people with the same interests/outlook	Decent eating/drinking establishment
Local Walks	Lack of taxi's	General provision for this type of visitor
Cycling	Town closes at 5pm	More heritage information
Roman Museum/Vindolanda	Army	Information about activities to do in the area
Rock Climbing		
Mountain Biking		
Kielder		
Open Space		
Scenery		