Explaining down turns in figures

Points of note concerning the data sources used with the Cambridge model.

Whilst it is recognised that the UKTS, IPS and ELVS all have their faults it is also widely acknowledged that these are the most robust and reliable data sets for tourism information currently available. Indeed, checks of both UKTS and ELVS have both concluded that there are no major flaws with the surveys. However, please remember the following points when interpreting the data: -

1. **All surveys are subject to error.** This is because surveys are based on a sample and the sample may not (to a greater or lesser extent) reflect the behaviours or opinions of everyone that the researcher's interested in. So, survey data can under or over-estimate actual figures. This means that for any given year, data may have been over or underestimated. It also means that the decreases or in fact increases seen between 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 in trips, nights and spend may be overestimated. In reality the changes could be much smaller.

2. **Differences are not always statistically significant**. Statisticians are able to calculate whether differences between different groups of people or differences over time are statistically significant. If the differences between two groups or two years are statistically significant, this means that you wouldn't expect to see those differences by chance i.e those two years or groups are genuinely different and an underlying factor or factors will account for the difference. So, the key things to remember here are that:

   Any drops may be exaggerated

   Any drops in trips, nights and spend may have happened by chance and don't indicate an underlying issue.

   Trends over time should be observed over a longer period i.e. over a good few years. Care should be taken not to over-interpret the significance of changes between 05, 06, 07 and 08. Also, as we're dealing with smaller areas in some instances, relatively small changes in volume can look large in terms of proportion and may, in a broader context, be less significant than at first glance.

Cambridge Methodology & Data Sources

The methodology used within the model remains the same as in previous years.

Wherever possible, 2008 data has been used to input in to the model, however, this was not possible for day visits data. The last England Leisure Visits Survey published was for 2005 data, the future structure of the survey is currently under discussion at a national level and it is not yet known when the next data will be released. In the absence of 2008 data, 2005 figures have been used in the Cambridge templates for the baseline figures. The Cambridge Day Visit Templates also require other information sources to be input to produce the final day visit figures, such as visits to attractions data and population estimates. Changes in day visit figures are as a result of updated 2008 data being fed into the day visit template alongside 2005 day visit figures, and day visit spend has been adjusted to take into account the Retail Price Index differential between 2005 and 2008.