

Report to: Culture, Heritage, and Sport Committee

Date: 21 July 2023

Subject: West Yorkshire Tourism

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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 In June, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority approved a joint application of Local Authorities and the Combined Authority to VisitEngland to establish a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) for West Yorkshire.
- 1.2 The application has been developed collaboratively by Local Authority and Combined Authority partners and was submitted on 19 June.
- 1.3 This paper provides an update on the application, the development of a regional Destination Management Plan, a governance model and funding.
- 1.4 Members are asked to:
 - Note the update of the Destination Management Plan and governance model.
 - Endorse the development of a funding proposal, to establish the region's LVEP, once accredited, subject the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework.

2. Information

Local Visitor Economy Partnership Application Update

- 2.1 There are currently five local authorities in the West Yorkshire Combined Authority area and five publicly funded Destination Management Organisations with Visit Bradford, Visit Calderdale, Visit Leeds, Experience Wakefield and Kirklees Council.
- 2.2 The Combined Authority and Local Authority partners have been working together to apply to VisitEngland to establish an LVEP for West Yorkshire, with Visit Leeds (Operated by Leeds City Council) as the lead applicant. An application has been submitted on 19 June.
- 2.3 The application was triggered by VisitEngland's implementation of the recommendations from the 'De Bois' Review of the Destination Management Organisation landscape in England. The review recommended the creation of a coherent national portfolio of destination management organisations, including a tier of accredited Tourist Boards called 'Local Visitor Economy Partnerships' tasked with leading, managing and marketing destinations. VisitEngland, the national tourist board for England, are administering the accreditation.
- 2.4 VisitEngland had previously announced 12 destinations that gained LVEP in the first round of applications in April, in addition to the three North East Destination Development Partnership (DDP) pilot LVEPs announced earlier this year. The next application window is not expected until early autumn.
- 2.5 The application process required the development of a Destination Management Plan for the region and the establishment of a governance board reflective of West Yorkshire's visitor economy and in alignment with existing strategic priorities. The work sits alongside Yorkshire-wide activity as guided by Yorkshire and Humber Leaders (see section below).
- 2.6 West Yorkshire partners put forward a comprehensive case of why and how developing, supporting and growing the visitor economy on a West Yorkshire footprint will make our region an even better place to live and work as well as to visit. The completed application form is attached to this paper.
- 2.7 A response from Visit England is expected within two months of submission.

Yorkshire-wide project

- 2.8 In parallel to the ongoing work on the West Yorkshire LVEP application, the Yorkshire and Humber Leaders Board initiated a visitor economy project at county level, triggered by the closure of Welcome to Yorkshire in spring 2022.

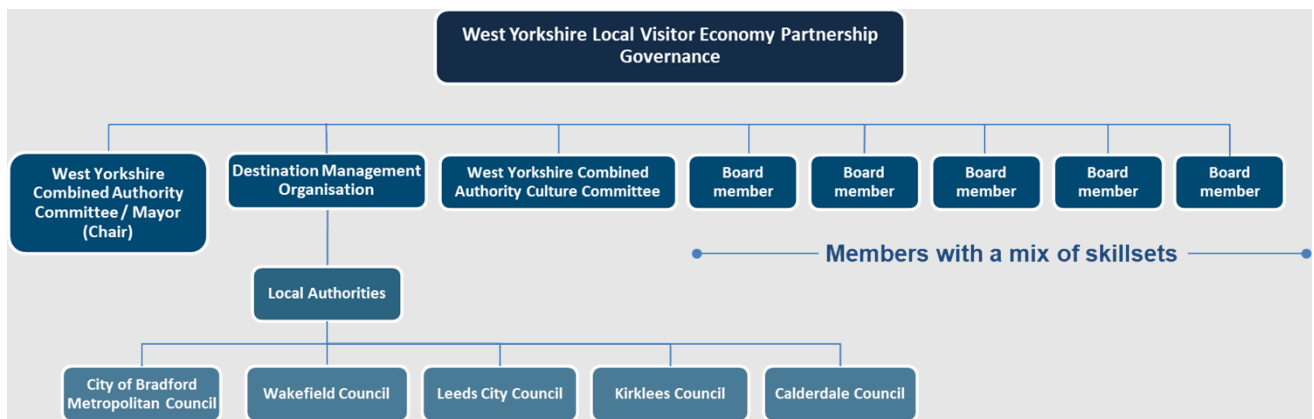
- 2.9 The primary remit of the project is on Destination Marketing on a Yorkshire level to build the Yorkshire brand, through data and research, targeted marketing campaigns and the delivery of county wide major events.
- 2.10 Work is overseen by a sub group of political leaders, including Mayor Tracy Brabin representing West Yorkshire, Councillor Les, representing North Yorkshire, Cllr Houghton (Chair), representing South Yorkshire and Cllr Ross, representing East Riding. The project is initially planned to take place over a two-year period.

Destination Management Plan

- 2.11 One of the criteria for LVEP applicants is to have a Destination Management Plan or tourism strategy based on the geography of the applicant and developed with local partners.
- 2.12 £25,000 of capacity funding already allocated to Leeds City Council was used to cover the costs and commission the Destination Management Plan for West Yorkshire.
- 2.13 A consultant was appointed to develop a Destination Management Plan (DMP) for West Yorkshire. This consultant is working with all Local Authorities in West Yorkshire to develop the plan.
- 2.14 The DMP will set a strategic direction for West Yorkshire as a destination over the medium to long-term and cover all fundamental aspects of destination management for West Yorkshire, including:
- Tourism performance and impacts, including effective use of data;
 - Operational working structures, strategic governance, and communication;
 - Identifying options and outlining a high-level plan towards sustainable funding of the LVEP;
 - Overall appeal and appearance, access, infrastructure, and visitor services;
 - Destination image, branding and promotion (marketing);
 - Product mix – development needs and opportunities;
- 2.15 Initial conversations with key stakeholders, including Local Authority and Combined Authority officers, have taken place and the strategic, research, product and media review is complete. The consultant is currently engaging with wider stakeholders across the West Yorkshire visitor economy to establish priorities.
- 2.16 VisitEngland have clarified that LVEP status can be achieved, subject to conditions, even if certain criteria have not been met/are not complete yet, as is the case with the West Yorkshire DMP, as they acknowledge the establishment of a LVEP is a process.

Governance

- 2.17 The proposed Governance structure for the West Yorkshire LVEP reflects the importance that has been attributed to the stewardship and development of the region's visitor economy at a senior political level.
- 2.18 Mayor Tracy Brabin has agreed to chair the West Yorkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership Board. In addition, there will be a direct link to the Combined Authority's legal Governance structure through a member representing the Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee. To ensure strong links between the committees, it is proposed that Nicky Chance-Thompson represents the Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee on the shadow Local Visitor Economy Partnership board during the period of its creation.
- 2.19 The proposed structure will ensure that any work on the visitor economy has strategic alignment to the wider agenda of the Combined Authority, with a particular focus on the Culture, Heritage and Sport Framework's core themes (people, place, skills and business), but also place, transport, business and skills support, and vice versa.
- 2.20 Additional members are being recruited in due course to ensure a mix of private, third and public sector voices and to reflect the diverse nature of the region's visitor economy. An outline structure for the proposed governance board can be seen below.



Funding

- 2.21 Becoming accredited by VisitEngland as LVEP does not currently attract any core or project funding from VisitEngland or DCMS. Part of the DMP will form the initial assessment of future income streams to create a self-sufficient, financially sustainable structure that is not dependent on public funding in the medium to long term.
- 2.22 Once the application is successful, any work to deliver on the priorities and activities identified in the regional DMP and on the core criteria of VisitEngland for LVEPs will require initial funding.

- 2.23 Although the region's DMP is still in development, likely work of the future West Yorkshire LVEP is envisaged to include the following:
- Regional Strategy development and delivery
 - Destination management planning
 - Coordination/liaison with VisitEngland/DCMS
 - Platform for partnership development between the public and private sector
 - Commission of outward services
 - Sector intelligence
 - Development of a skills and business support offer specific to the tourism sector
 - Tourism product development and delivery
 - Near domestic marketing
 - Region wide Travel Trade and Conferencing/Conventions
 - Alignment of local marketing strategy and performance
 - Convention Bureau Services
 - Research and evaluation services
 - Digital Services
- 2.24 The meeting of the Combined Authority in February 2023 outlined indicative funding of £500,000 for the West Yorkshire tourism workstream from gainshare, and in June 2023, the Combined Authority endorsed the development of a funding proposal subject to the Authority's assurance framework and a final Combined Authority decision. Members are asked to endorse the development of a funding proposal, to establish the West Yorkshire LVEP, once accredited by VisitEngland.
- 2.25 Building on the findings of the region's DMP (currently in development, see above) this would mean a Strategic Assessment would be developed over the summer and, subject to approval, a business case could be completed for consideration and approval in late 2023 / early 2024.
- 2.26 Part of the indicative funding would also support the Yorkshire-wide tourism project that is aligned to but separate from and taking place parallel to the West Yorkshire LVEP workstream. This contribution is expected to be £50,000.
- 2.27 As laid out in the March Combined Authority meeting, a do-nothing approach could have led to a situation where all or a number of Local Authorities submitted an application to become an LVEP in their own right.
- 2.28 Had only one succeeded, this would have relegated neighbouring Local Authority DMOs to 'tier three' of the new VisitEngland structure, meaning little or no support from VisitEngland, no access to current or future funding opportunities, England wide campaigns, country managers or international travel trade campaigns.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1. Embedding sustainable tourism is one of the key programme goals for the LVEP programme. The strategic development of the West Yorkshire visitor economy enables a focus on sustainable activities for and by visitors and businesses and other actors within the sector that minimise the negative environmental impact of tourism. There is also an opportunity to link existing activity delivered in line with the Combined Authority's net-zero ambitions, such as promoting sustainable travel of visitors to and within the region.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1. The creation of an LVEP realises the ambition that place matters, and that West Yorkshire is an outward looking global region with its people and businesses operating on the world stage. Strategic development and support of our visitor economy intends a positive shift of local and wider perceptions of our region, contributing to local pride, as well as attract new investment, grow businesses and create jobs. As outlined in the West Yorkshire Investment Strategy, inclusive growth cannot be a bolt-on and any project seeking funding from the Combined Authority must demonstrate a proactive and targeted approach to engaging with and bringing benefit to disadvantaged groups. This approach will apply equally to any proposals for investment in the West Yorkshire LVEP.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1. The approach to tourism will draw on the experience of our existing work and focus on promoting initiatives that support people from a diverse range of backgrounds to access tourist attractions and employment in the tourism and hospitality sector.
- 5.2. The recommendation from the De Bois Review calls for a diverse governance board for the LVEP. The aim will be that the governance will reflect the diversity of our region.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The meeting of the Combined Authority in February 2023 outlined indicative funding of £500,000 for the West Yorkshire tourism workstream from gainshare. A robust funding proposal, subject to the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework and final decision, will be developed.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1. There are presently no staffing implications directly arising from this report. However, the Destination Management Plan may indicate additional resource

requirements to deliver a programme of works and this will be reflected in the business case that would be developed.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1. The application for Local Visitor Economy Partnership status was a joint project between all five West Yorkshire Local Authorities and the Combined Authority. The development of the Destination Management Plan includes extensive consultation with the visitor economy and key stakeholders from the public and private sector.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. Members are asked to:

- Note the update of the Destination Management Plan and governance model, including the proposal that Nicky Chance-Thompson represents this committee on the LVEP board. In addition to the LVEP board being chaired by the Mayor.
- Endorse the development of a funding proposal, to establish the region's LVEP, once accredited, subject the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework.

11. Background Documents

[West Yorkshire Tourism Paper](#), West Yorkshire Combined Authority Meeting from 22 June 2023

[West Yorkshire Tourism Paper](#), West Yorkshire Combined Authority Meeting from 16 March 2023

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – West Yorkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership application