



Report to:	Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee
Date:	27 October 2023
Subject:	West Yorkshire Tourism
Director:	Felix Kumi-Ampofo, Director, Inclusive Economy, Skills & Culture
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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 type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	3
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 In July, VisitEngland, the national tourism body for England, approved the joint application of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (CA) and all Local Authorities to become accredited as a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) for West Yorkshire.
- 1.2 This paper provides an overview and update on a number of related developments concerning the newly established LVEP, including the Destination Management Plan, Governance Board and Strategic Assessment submitted as part of an emerging funding proposal.
- 1.3 Members are asked to:
 - Note the proposed governance arrangements and reporting mechanism for the LVEP.
 - Note the content of the Destination Management Plan, and the invitation for Committee Members to engage in activities that will prioritise its actions.
 - Members are invited to actively engage with the business case development via a proposed workshop (16th Nov) to build on the Strategic Assessment, which has been submitted in early October as the first stage in the Assurance process.

2. Information

Background

2.1 VisitEngland are in the process of creating a national network of strategic Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP) across England. The LVEPs work in local, regional and national collaboration on shared priorities and targets to support and grow the visitor economy. The creation of LVEPs was part of the UK Government's response to the recommendations of 'The de Bois Review: an independent review of DMOs in England,' to reshape destination management across England, reducing fragmentation and bringing coherence to its DMO landscape.

2.2 There are now 25 LVEPs across England. West Yorkshire was accredited in July 2023.

Destination Management Plan for West Yorkshire

2.3 Part of the application process was to develop a Destination Management Plan - a tourism strategy - for the region. The plan focuses on the priorities and collaborative activities that, at a West Yorkshire level, will build a better and more productive visitor economy. The plan is intended to complement rather than duplicate what exists for Local Authority areas.

2.4 The visitor economy makes a significant contribution to economic activity in the region. In 2019, West Yorkshire attracted approximately 53m visitors and the visitor economy generated £2.3bn of direct expenditure (Great Britain Tourism Survey, International Passenger Survey and Great Britain Day Visits Survey), with an overall contribution of nearly £5bn (Office for National Statistics). West Yorkshire competes with other Northern destinations (e.g. Greater Manchester, Liverpool, York, the Peak District etc.) and for example attracts fewer overnight trips and spend than Greater Manchester and the national average (2019 figures):

- Total overnight trips (international and domestic) per head of population in WY = 1.3; national average = 2.4; GM = 2.0
- Total overnight spend (international and domestic) per head of population in WY = £263; national average = £779; GM = £552

2.5 This has not been helped by the enormous change and uncertainty seen over recent years caused by Covid-19, Brexit, the cost-of-living crisis, and inflation.

2.6 West Yorkshire has considerable strengths as a destination, including:

- Strong products and well-established events, with our culture, heritage and sport offer forming a significant proportion of those;
- A track record for TV and film locations;

- A core conference offer in Leeds,
- Being part of the wider Yorkshire brand;
- Our large and diverse population, which adds to our rich cultural heritage but also forming our two largest visitor groups (day visits and visiting friends and relatives).
- The years of culture culminating in Bradford UK City of Culture 2025, representing a huge opportunity to raise West Yorkshire's profile- regionally, nationally, and internationally and explore legacy events.

2.7 Challenges include our under-developed holiday and international markets, limited hotel capacity outside of Leeds, and a lack of a purpose build/larger convention centre, strong competitor destinations (e.g. Liverpool, Manchester, York, Peal District etc.).

2.8 The Destination Management Plan identified three priority areas for activity:

Priority 1: Increase awareness and appeal of West Yorkshire as a destination;

Priority 2: Develop our product and places;

Priority 3: Manage our visitor economy effectively.

2.9 The DMP will be delivered in two main phases. The Foundation Phase (year 1-2) will focus on developing the LVEP and creating delivery structures, building stakeholder partnerships across the region, implement new programmes of activity and develop more sustainable funding streams. The Development Phase (year 3 onwards) will focus on delivering sustainable funding streams, enhancing programme activity and maximising growth opportunities for the visitor economy. Below is a summary of indicative actions which will be refined and prioritised with the LVEP Governance Board (see section 2.9).

Action area	Description	Phase
Proposition Scoping	Research and market testing of potential leisure concept to identify interest, markets and refine messaging	Foundation
Partnership and campaign development	Identify and develop 2-3 core campaigns, implement and monitor impact. Likely to include the core cultural offering	Foundation / Development
Cross marketing	Create a local channel network, distribution process and monitor impact	Foundation+
PR	Collaboration to support campaigns. Specialist PR resources to support existing teams (e.g. WYCA)	Foundation+
Itinerary development	Development of itineraries and bookable products	Development
Group marketing	Audit the current group offer by individual destinations and identify opportunities to extend reach	Foundation/ Development

Action area	Description	Phase
Conference - development marketing	Scoping expansion of the Ambassador programme and explore a Venues of Character portfolio.	Development

- 2.10 Members are asked to note the update on the DMP, discuss the proposed areas for action and provide a steer towards prioritising them.

Local Visitor Economy Partnership Governance

- 2.11 Mayor Tracy Brabin will chair the West Yorkshire LVEP Governance Board. In addition, Nicky Chance-Thompson is a Member, and will represent the Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee. Other Members include the Local Authority Destination Management Organisations, and representatives for CHS, business, accommodation, transport and tourism.
- 2.12 The WY LVEP Governance Board will oversee the strategic direction, performance, and funding of the LVEP. The first meeting will be held on 24th October.
- 2.13 Committee oversight will be provided by the Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee, with the LVEP Board providing updates on DMP development and delivery as a standing agenda item at quarterly CHS committee meetings.
- 2.14 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. The proposed structure was presented and endorsed by CHS Committee Members at the [July 2023](#) meeting.

Funding proposal

- 2.15 The CHS Committee endorsed the intention to develop a funding proposal to establish the West Yorkshire LVEP, with the intention of the partnership becoming self-sustainable in the medium to long-term, and deliver initial activity to support and grow the regional visitor economy in the [July 2023](#) meeting.
- 2.16 In line with the CA's Assurance Framework, a Strategic Assessment was submitted in early October. Subject to approval, a Business Justification Case will be submitted for consideration in December 2023, and funding approval may then be provided in early 2024.
- 2.17 The Strategic Assessment details the strategic fit of the proposal with regional ambitions, priorities and the Mayor's key pledges. It outlines how the LVEP will implement the activity identified in the Destination Management Plan, including the coordination of research and intelligence, marketing, product development, skills and business support,

to enhance the quality, diversity and sustainability of the tourism offer in the region, leading to increased visitor numbers and spend, economic activity and job creation.

- 2.18 The proposal provides the structure and resource for West Yorkshire to participate in the Yorkshire-wide Destination Marketing group. This initiative was created by the Yorkshire and Humber Leaders Board, triggered by the closure of Welcome to Yorkshire in spring 2022. The primary remit of the project is on Destination Marketing and to build the Yorkshire brand, through data and research, targeted marketing campaigns and the delivery of county wide major events.
- 2.19 Subject to approval of the Strategic Assessment, Members will have an opportunity to steer the development of the Business Justification Case. A workshop with Committee Members is being proposed to take place in November but we would welcome feedback on additional / alternative mechanisms for engagement.

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 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.

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 Business Justification Case, subject to the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework and final decision, is being developed.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. The information contained in Appendices 1 and 2 are exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 to Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Combined Authority. It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the content of Appendices 1 and 2 as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, as publication could prejudice the financial or business affairs of the Authority.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1. There are presently no staffing implications directly arising from this report. However, the Strategic Assessment proposes the creation of a role either within the Combined Authority or within Leeds City Council, to manage delivery of the Destination Management Plan activity.

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 and has been approved by the Combined Authority. The CHS Committee provided a joint Letter of Support to the application. The development of the Destination Management Plan included consultation with the visitor economy and key stakeholders from the public and private sector.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. Note the content of the Destination Management Plan, and the invitation for Committee Members to actively engage in prioritising its actions by sending comments to Officers by email and/or via a face-to-face workshop (provisionally on the afternoon of 16th Nov).
- 10.2. Note the invitation for Committee Members to actively engage with the business case development by sending comments to Officers by email and/or via a face-to-face workshop (provisionally on the afternoon of 16th Nov).
- 10.3. Note the proposed governance arrangements and reporting mechanism for the LVEP.

11. Background Documents

Culture, Heritage and Sport Committee 21 July 2023: [Item 8 – West Yorkshire Tourism](#)

12. Appendices

‘EXEMPT – Item 7, Appendix 1, Strategic Assessment Application Form’

‘EXEMPT – Item 7, Appendix 2, West Yorkshire Destination Management Plan (Draft)’