

Local Enterprise Partnership

07 July 2022

Destination Management / Marketing in South Yorkshire

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Reason why exempt:	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Policy Decision
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	Not a Key Decision

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

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Executive Summary

The paper seeks approval to undertake a review of Destination Management and Marketing (DMO) at the South Yorkshire level to inform both the regional level and wider review of DMO being undertaken at the Yorkshire level.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

A stronger and more vibrant visitor economy offer creates more businesses, jobs and visitor spend in the region.

Recommendations

- 1) The LEP established a project working group comprising representatives from each council area tasked with:
 - Commissioning a detailed analysis of the visitor economy in South Yorkshire including the opportunities for growth over the short, medium and longer term
 - Undertaking research into best practice local and sub-regional DMO activity nationally
 - Develop proposals for recommendation to the MCA on how DMO activity could be taken forward most effectively within the new operating context at the national and regional level.
- 2) That a LEP private sector board member be nominated to provide strategic input and advice to the project group.
- 3) That a separate workstream be developed that develops the common narrative and story that pulls together the assets and opportunities that South Yorkshire has and that could form part of a major marketing and communications programme.

- 4) That the project working group make full consideration of the best way to engage the private sector.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

n/a

1. Background

- 1.1 In late 2021 the Yorkshire Leaders Board (the twenty council Leaders and two Metro-Mayor's in Yorkshire and Humber) commissioned an independent review of Welcome to Yorkshire (WTY), the Destination Management Organisation for the region. The review concluded that public funding for WTY would cease at the end of March 2022. As a result of that decision WTY ceased operations in March.
- 1.2 The Yorkshire Leaders Board recommended the establishment of a Local Authority project group to produce a plan for a new DMO, including what functions a new DMO would undertake on behalf of the region and the funding framework on which that DMO would be supported.

The South Yorkshire MCA and a number of local councils are directly engaged on that project group, with all four Councils and the Mayor to be fully engaged on any proposals and decisions taken at the Yorkshire level.

- 1.3 Whilst the future of Welcome to Yorkshire was being decided the Government were also undertaking a national review of DMOs. This national review laid bare the problems and challenges for DMO's and the tourism sector and called for fundamental change to DMO's. The Government are expected to publish their own response to the De Bois Review soon. This will help to inform the work being undertaken at the Yorkshire level and the work we need to do sub-regionally.
- 1.4 External funding of Destination Management and Marketing campaign work particularly for the international market is principally driven by developing partnerships with Visit Britain / Visit England. It is increasingly clear that VBVE expect to see joined up approaches across sub regions and regions to attract support from them and/or DCMS.
- 1.5 South Yorkshire was not particularly well represented by Welcome to Yorkshire under the old arrangements. This was a view represented by visitor economy businesses and key partners in the region when informal consultation was undertaken in late 2021 and early 2022. Nor has South Yorkshire acted as a strong client of Yorkshire wide DMO activity and that this is hampered by a poorly developed visitor economy evidence base, the lack of a common narrative or focus, and little join-up across the assets and local place promotion work undertaken at the local council level, all underpinned by the absence of a clear strategy or plan for investing in our visitor economy, limited resourcing, and no clear promotion of the offer.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The changes at the national and Yorkshire level mean that this is a good time to undertake a full review of how we work to support the visitor economy at the South Yorkshire level.
- 2.2 To develop a meaningful input into the national and regional response we need to tackle key issues as they relate to the evidence base, the common narrative and the potential of the region and what we need from the national and regional bodies.
- 2.3 We also need to consider whether there are better more effective ways of acting at the South Yorkshire level and to explore in full the way the region could work more cohesively with a clear funding, governance and accountability framework in place.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

The recommendations as set out in the body of this report task a project group with developing proposals for the MCA on how South Yorkshire can most effectively support its visitor economy.

- 3.2 The work is exploratory and seeks to deepen our evidence base, the common narrative the region could tell and options on how we can organise ourselves most effectively to deliver it.

3.3 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

Implementing the recommendations in Option 1 help us develop more detailed policy, funding and governance proposals.

3.4 Recommended Option

Option 1

4. Consultation on Proposal

As part of the wider Yorkshire level project group a light touch stakeholder engagement process has been put in place. A number of existing forums are in place and are being used to test out high level principles of what a Yorkshire wide DMO could and should deliver.

- 4.1 The recommendations set out in the body of this report propose considerable stakeholder engagement be undertaken with the private sector.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 To directly inform the work being undertaken at the Yorkshire level, and to position South Yorkshire's response to the Government's response to the De Bois review this work needs to take place over the second half of 2022 with a view to providing options to the MCA in early 2023. This will support budget and resourcing decisions.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

- 6.1 The External Affairs budget approved by the MCA in March 2022 includes an allocation to cover the costs of the DMO review.
- 6.2 Any external capacity procured to assist with the DMO review would be subject to the recently revised contract procedures rules approved by the MCA in June 2022.

7. Legal Implications and Advice

- 7.1 None at this stage

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

- 8.1 None at this stage

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

- 9.1 None at this stage, the review would be framed to consider any issues relevant to the evidence base and future operations.

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

- 10.1 None at this stage

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

- 11.1 None at this stage

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

- 12.1 The outcomes of the review will be communicated subject to approval by the MCA / LEP on this.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

None