

Mayoral Combined Authority Board

Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) and South Yorkshire Destination Management Plan

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

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

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Executive Summary

This paper provides the MCA Board with an update on the establishment of a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP). The paper seeks formal endorsement of the South Yorkshire Destination Management Plan, sets out proposals for the next steps in establishing appropriate governance models and seeks endorsement of the Partnership Agreement between all partners engaged in the LVEP.

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

The MCA Board are asked to:

1. Approve the South Yorkshire Destination Management Plan (Appendix A)

2. Approve the establishing of an LVEP Advisory Forum to support the MCA Culture, Creative and Digital Portfolio Lead.

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

None

1. Background

- 1.1 South Yorkshire has a strong visitor economy offer. The offer has grown in recent years with the development of existing destinations along with new destinations across the region.
- Following a submission to Visit England / Department for Media, Culture and Sport South Yorkshire was successful in securing formal Local Visitor Economy Partnership accreditation status.
- 1.2 Since formal accreditation was approved the MCA and the four councils have been engaging with visitor economy partners, working to develop:
- 1) A South Yorkshire Destination Management Plan which is appended to this report.
 - 2) A formal Partnership Agreement between the four constituent council members and the MCA
 - 3) Governance arrangements that reflect the requirements of Visit England, the MCAs existing governance model and the nature of South Yorkshire's visitor economy.
- 1.3 Work across the Yorkshire level is also underway, being led by Barnsley MBC on behalf of the Yorkshire and Humber Leaders with the full support of the South Yorkshire MCA and each MCA Constituent Council.
- Across Yorkshire, other sub-regional arrangements, including at the West Yorkshire level, are being developed alongside the wider Yorkshire level work.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 **Development of a South Yorkshire Destination Management Plan**
- Since formal accreditation status was secured the MCA and the four councils have been working on the development of a South Yorkshire Destination Management Plan.
- The South Yorkshire DMP provides a galvanising framework for the whole of South Yorkshire to build on collective and individual strengths. The plan focuses on the priorities and collaborative activities that, at a South Yorkshire level, will build a better and more productive visitor economy sector.
- Summary of the key DMP messages:**
- The visitor economy is already big business for South Yorkshire. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (2019), it generated over £1 billion of direct expenditure annually to our economy.

- South Yorkshire has considerable **strengths**: flagship attractions, with strong clusters of family attractions and heritage attractions; our event venues (which are, in some cases, nationally unique) and events (sporting, music, theatre and cultural, academic.); our conference tourism offer; Our location, with great road and rail access; and our experienced DMO teams (with good marketing collateral, momentum and trajectory), plus strong private sector engagement in most areas.
- Our **challenges** include: low, and sometimes negative, place perceptions and awareness; the dispersed and homogenous nature of our destination (which impacts on the way people visit us); a general lack of resources with destinations at different levels of capacity and development; a lack of a variety of accommodation in some areas; a lack of sizeable purpose built (or dedicated) conference facilities; a need for refurbishment of some key facilities; plus poor data and intelligence.

2.2

DMP recommendations

The DMP responds to both the challenges and opportunities through five action areas where collective SY activity can make an impact:

Action Areas:

- Action Area 1: Develop our product and places; this builds upon Place-Plans, plans to invest in cultural, visitor economy and heritage assets in the region.
- Action Area 2: Increase awareness of our destinations; in particular focusing on marketing a wider offer (e.g. heritage) rather than a single place or single destination.
- Action Area 3: Develop specific reasons to visit; for example developing a particular cluster of opportunities for families and exploring SY event programming.
- Action Area 4: Enhance our transport provision and connectivity; ensuring that the new Local Transport Plan and investment into tram, rail, road and bus support visitor economy objectives.
- Action Area 5: Manage our visitor economy effectively; focusing on building the capability and capacity of the LVEP on data insights, advocacy and engagement and sector and stakeholder engagement.

2.3

Governance of the Local Visitor Economy Partnership

Visit England expect LVEPs to develop structures that reflect the geography, the priorities, the private sector business base (hoteliers, attractions and visitor economy assets) of the LVEP and to demonstrate how the governance model will inform decision-making.

In South Yorkshire the MCA has already formally enshrined the LVEP within the Creative, Cultural and Digital portfolio ensuring that visitor economy strategy and oversight have a clear and accountable route into MCA decision-making, with Sheffield City Council acting as the lead accountable body for the LVEP.

Within each council area there are established visitor economy board / steering groups in place. These will remain and continue to take decisions and inform local approaches.

South Yorkshire needs to develop an approach that reflects the unique and distinct specialisms and capabilities of South Yorkshire – whilst also enabling us to work better together on major events, data and insights, visitor economy business engagement, transport and infrastructure, planning and investment and skills and business support for the sector.

2.3 **Formal Partnership Agreement**

The LVEP is required to produce a formal agreement between all parties that codifies working arrangements, sets out the broad programmes of work to be taken forward and the relationships between constituent council members, the MCA and Sheffield City Council as the accountable body for the LVEP.

3. **Options Considered and Recommended Proposal**

3.1 **Option 1**

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that the Board approves the South Yorkshire Destination Management Plan (Appendix A). The Plan has been the subject of significant external engagement, it is drawn from evidence and analysis of the sector across South Yorkshire and draws on the significant amount of work undertaken in each local council area on local visitor economy plans.

The Plan sets out five areas of work that collective action through the LVEP can make a tangible impact on the visitor economy in South Yorkshire.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the MCA establish an interim LVEP Advisory Forum to enable the LVEP to establish itself, to build relationships regionally and nationally – and whilst Visit England / DCMS develop their long-term funding proposals for LVEPs.

The interim Forum would:

- Have a strong private sector input and be principally drawn from members of local boards
- Have oversight of the DMP – reviewing evidence base, supporting development of implementation plans, funding bids, advocacy and engagement).
- Include Visit England and other key stakeholders within it (e.g English Heritage / Arts Council England).
- Chaired by a private sector lead.
- Have political representation from each council area.

Once the Advisory Forum is established, when national funding arrangements for visitor economy are clearer and regional arrangements at the Yorkshire level are increasingly established the MCA would seek to formalise the Advisory Board

through a transparent recruitment process including the appointment of a private sector Chair to work alongside the MCA portfolio lead.

3.3 **Option 1 Risks and Mitigations**

Governance: Securing a diverse and representative membership that balances an appropriate split across geography, type of attraction and balance between public and private sectors will be challenging. To ensure we achieve an appropriate split the Portfolio lead will work with MCA members to promote, secure and achieve an appropriate mix.

3.4 **Option 2**

Only one option is presented for Members to consider.

3.5 **Option 2 Risks and Mitigations**

N/A

3.6 **Recommended Option**

Option 1

4. **Consultation on Proposal**

4.1 The Destination Management Plan has been the subject of significant external engagement, including with visitor economy groups in the region and Visit England. Feedback and responses to the Plan have been supportive.

5. **Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 **Implementing the governance proposals:** Should the proposals be supported by the MCA the establishment of an Interim Advisory Board can commence in Spring 2024 with oversight of the formal establishment being led by the Portfolio Lead Member and Lead Chief Executive.

6. **Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice**

6.1 The MCA has made provision in its 2023/24 and 2024/25 budget for this programme of work. The funding for this activity is derived from the Gainshare allocation committed in March 2022, and is capped at £500k in total. Further work will be required collectively by regional partners to identify a sustainable funding model to deliver the Destination Management Plan.

7. **Legal Implications and Advice**

7.1 The MCA has functions under s.144 Local Government Act 1972 and the Localism Act 2011 to participate in and fund activity to encourage and build the local visitor economy.

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.

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 **Destination Management Plan** – the plan will be made publicly available and shared with visitor economy partners. No formal launch of the plan is proposed.

Advisory Board recruitment – the LVEP will develop a communications and engagement plan to support the Advisory Board recruitment process.

List of Appendices Included:

A South Yorkshire Destination Management Plan

Background Papers

MCA Board, 05 June 2023 - Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) for South Yorkshire