

Cabinet report: Local Visitor Economy Partnership Agreement for Coventry & Warwickshire

Date: 20 September 2023

Appendix: LVEP programme and letter from Helen Peters to Shakespeare's England Board members

1. Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP) programme

Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Programme for English Destination Management Organisations (DMOs)

Developed and administered by VisitEngland following close consultation with DMOs in autumn 2022, the LVEP programme is one of the key recommendations in the Government's response to the independent de Bois Review of Destination Management Organisations in England.

Developed and administered by VisitEngland, the programme is creating a national portfolio of strategic and high-performing LVEPs working in collaboration locally, regionally and nationally 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.

In July 2023, VisitEngland has announced seven new destinations have gained Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status. The new LVEPs are:

London & Partners; Cotswolds Plus; Visit Isle of Wight;; Visit Worcestershire; **Coventry & Warwickshire**; South Yorkshire; West Yorkshire

They join the programme alongside the previous 15 LVEPs announced in April 2023: These are:

Marketing Cheshire; Experience Oxfordshire; Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly; Visit Hull and East Yorkshire; Visit West; Marketing Manchester; Visit Peak District, Derbyshire and Derby; Visit Hertfordshire; Visit Kent; Liverpool City Region; Cumbria Tourism; **Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country**

They join the programme alongside the North East DDP pilot LVEPs:

NewcastleGateshead Initiative; Visit County Durham and Visit Northumberland

NewcastleGateshead Initiative, Visit County Durham and Visit Northumberland form the pilot Destination Development Partnership (DDP) in the North East of England, led by NewcastleGateshead Initiative, first announced by the UK Government in November 2022. The pilot is a valuable opportunity to prove the DDP concept and the impact the model can have on growing the visitor economy, strengthening the case for future funding.

VisitEngland worked in close consultation with DMOs to develop the LVEP programme, holding a series of roundtables across England in autumn 2022 with more than 100 participants.

Benefits of joining the LVEP Programme

Successful LVEPs will work closely with VisitEngland during the set-up process and beyond, with ongoing support from a team of five new Regional Development Leads.

As well as achieving a nationally recognised official status, LVEPs will provide strong leadership and management of their destinations, working collaboratively with the public and private sector. They will help to shape and deliver national strategy and activities. Their important role will be promoted across government and national agencies, ensuring the local visitor economy is an active and valued contributor to Levelling Up and the wider economy.

LVEPs will be able to access expert advice, dedicated toolkits and training programmes from VisitBritain/VisitEngland in areas ranging from commercialisation, distribution, accessibility and sustainability to business support and marketing. An important strand of support will be highlighting available Government funding streams as well as developing and providing a 'toolkit' to help LVEPs with bids to those streams.

Protecting and growing the local visitor economy is an active and valued contributor to 'Levelling Up' and the wider economy. LVEPs will contribute to this by providing strong leadership and management of their destinations working closely with the public and private sectors.

VisitEngland Director Andrew Stokes said:

"Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) are at the heart of transforming the visitor economy landscape in England and we are delighted to welcome the new LVEPs onto the programme.

We look forward to continuing our close collaboration with these destinations as the LVEPs are established, providing ongoing support including a dedicated VisitEngland regional development lead.

Having the right national and local infrastructure in place to grow our visitor economy, in an inclusive, accessible and sustainable way, will ensure England continues to be a compelling destination for both domestic and international visitors."

2. Letter from Helen Peters, Shakespeare's England to SE Board members

Dear All

We are delighted to advise you that we have received confirmation that VisitEngland has officially awarded accreditation for the proposed Coventry & Warwickshire Destination Partnership LVEP (Local Visitor Economy Partnership), and would like to thank you for all the support given to Shakespeare's England and Destination Coventry in driving this initiative forward. This is very much Step 1 and the beginning of a journey for us to take collectively, to shape our LVEP and we look forward to working with you across the next 12 months to do just that.

It is vital that all stakeholders feel part of the process and we will be looking to set-up a series of workshops and consultation meetings so we can shape this collectively together. We are aware that there has been a great deal of change within many of the local authorities that make up Coventry and Warwickshire, and thus want to ensure that all the relevant people are fully conversant with this exciting opportunity and can input.

The Coventry & Warwickshire Destination Partnership LVEP, will see both organisations working more collaboratively and efficiently along with the local authorities to ensure the region’s tourism community has a powerful voice at national level with both VisitEngland and Government, when it comes to shaping future policies, and for all visitor economy priorities. VisitEngland is working with Government to elevate the status of LVEPs, to ensure they are considered for any funding programmes that affect the visitor economy. In addition, we, as a region, could benefit via shared destination marketing opportunities and access to data-rich research projects, which will help inform future decision making.

As part of the approval, certain conditions, with specified timelines for delivery, have been laid down by VisitEngland, which are detailed below:

1	30/09/2023	Agreement to be signed by all LVEP partners as stipulated in the application
2	30/11/2023	Agree Year 1 Growth Action Plan and VE/VB support package
3	Duration of agreement	Specific actions to support Tourism Associations to be included in the Growth Plan
4	28/02/2024	Annual review by VE/VB of CWDP LVEP’s financial position
5	31/03/2024	Development of a joint framework of the existing DMP
6	31/03/2024	Continued support for Destination Coventry by public sector partners beyond the proof-of-concept stage
7	30/06/2024	Development and confirmation of integrated governance and staffing structures

As indicated above, one of the conditions is the development of a joint framework, which will take into account Shakespeare’s England’s existing Destination Management Plan, Destination Coventry’s Tourism Strategy and the Warwickshire County Council Tourism Sector Growth Plan. The aim is to take as much of what is already being done and integrate it into one overarching Destination Management Plan.

This is not a legal partnership – but it is officially recognised by VisitEngland as the vehicle for tourism delivery in Coventry and Warwickshire, and it is up to us to work collaboratively to shape the governance, structure, and most appropriate funding model for our LVEP, which reflects the needs, similarities and differences of all stakeholder partners.

We are currently working on a Press Release, which will go out sometime during the latter part of next week and will be sent to you in advance for information.

HP/PJ July 2023

Paul Jones and I are very much looking forward to working with all our LVEP stakeholder partners to ensure we become known as ‘best in class’ for LVEPs across England.

Regards,

Helen Peters (Shakespeare’s England) & Paul Jones (Destination Coventry)